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PUNCH



SEPTEMBER

24

1947

Vol. CCXIII

No. 5569

For conditions of sale and supply of Punch
see bottom of last page of text

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"soaked for some time in sea water...
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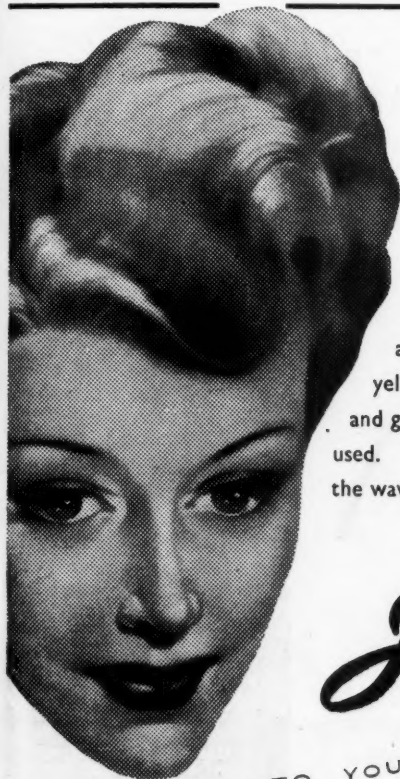
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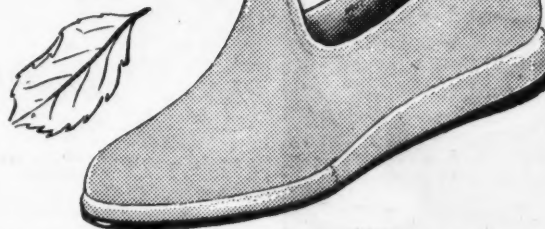
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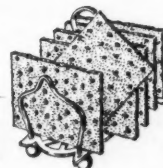
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That Radar was British and so was the Jet.
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With Vita-Weat *quite* the most eminent name.

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says

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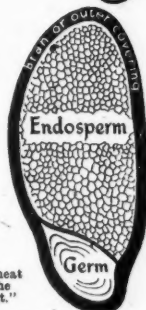
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The starch of the grain supplies the calories, the energy, the human fuel of both flour and bread. It is petrol for the human motors. The germ, though it supplies little energy, contains most of the calcium, most of the iron, and almost all the vitamins. It is the place where the 'extras' are kept.

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Chekov — or



Children's Hour

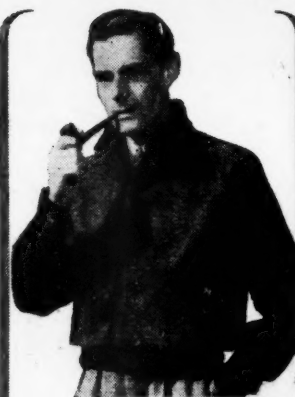
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MEDIUM — SWEET
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Bird Hints

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MAKE sure that your Canary is kept in a room with a moderate, even temperature, and away from draughts. A light cover should be thrown over the cage at night so that your bird will not suffer from the drop in temperature. Dirty or dusty food can be harmful, so make sure that your bird gets clean seed at all times. You will be quite safe if you give him CAPERNS BRISTOL SEED.

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KOKO FOR THE HAIR

A Question of Export

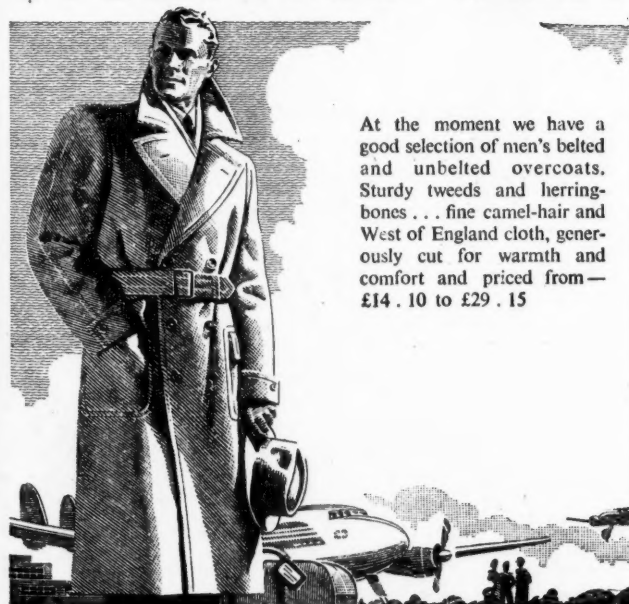


The development of overseas markets raises many questions, especially for those who are entering the export trade for the first time. Methods of payment, export and import licences, the preparation of shipping documents, exchange rates and regulations—on all these matters expert guidance may be needed. The customer of Lloyds Bank has no difficulty in obtaining it. He consults the manager of his branch.

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LOOK TO LOCKHEED FOR LEADERSHIP

How do YOU spell economy-economy-economy?

As a pipe smoker you spell it out carefully and slowly—'T-H-R-E-E N-U-N-S'. Cunningly cut, each ounce of this tobacco lasts you longer, saves you money. Not without good reason has it been called 'the tobacco of curious cut'.



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... to the last detail which completes
the outfit and endows the wearer with the
satisfaction of having
chosen worthily and well.



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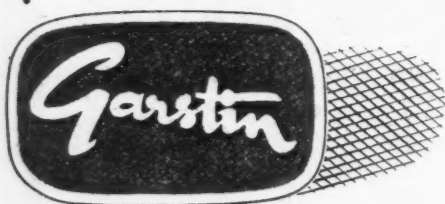
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suggest that the transition can be made smooth and pleasur-
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Weaving Tweed on hand-loom with the traditional skill for which the
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outdoor occasion.



LOOK FOR THE MARK ON THE CLOTH
LOOK FOR THE LABEL ON THE GARMENT



Issued by The Harris Tweed Association Limited
H.9



PUNCH

or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCXIII No. 5569

September 24 1947

Charivaria

BOTH teams in a football-match were reprimanded by the referee for rough play. What League did they think they were in? he wanted to know. The Housewives'?

Underground caves, believed to be the most extensive in Britain, have just been discovered in Westmorland. It was the noise of the squatters that drew attention to them.



Oversight

"The Senior School re-opened on Wednesday for the autumn term, having been redecorated throughout. The staff is unchanged."—*Oxford Times*."

An amateur billiards champion tells us that certain classical excerpts played on a radiogram help to inspire him when practising shots. One of his favourite movements is said to be a Rachmaninoff.

"Honey is being sold by producers at extortionate prices in the black market," complains a shopkeeper. It's not true, unfortunately, that a beekeeper can only sting you once.

"The bow-legs of the British bull-dog are a symbol of courage," says a writer. It's the same with the many holiday-makers who wear shorts.

Welfare facilities offered to employees by a Sheffield steel factory include a hair-cutting service. The barber is studying how to introduce the conveyor strop.

The direct-to-consumer principle will be applied this winter to the fuel shortage.

"HOT WATER-BOTTLES—THE SUPPLY POSITION.

Deliveries are now beginning to trickle through..."

From a Manufacturer's circular.

Extraordinary how the truth leaks out, isn't it?

An American university offers a course in ice cream manufacture. With choice of degrees — Centigrade or Fahrenheit.

Owing to the lack of financial support a Kansas man who set out to walk round the world backwards has abandoned the attempt. This should bring the public to its senses.



A police officer won twenty-six prizes at a recent vegetable show. He proudly conducted spectators round his beet.

Mrs. Grundy at the Swimming Sports

"Cathie Gibson, the 17-year-old British champion, made the fastest time of 1 min. 17.2 sec. in the women's 100 metres back-stroke heats of the European swimming championships here to-day. Margaret Girvan (Britain) was disqualified for an improper turn."

"Daily Telegraph."

An old rugby footballer says that as a schoolboy in 1872 he took part in a match watched by Gladstone. As a compliment to the great statesman the players reversed their usual procedure and collared high.



Ichabod

(Or the Lament of an Undesirable Character on being Directed into Essential Industry)

I AM servant of all I survey,
My wrongs there is none to dispute,
I am forcibly taken away
To do work in a dungaree suit.
Austerity! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
I could fight a policeman in arms
To get out of this horrible place.

I am far from urbanity's reach
And the delicate life of the "boys"
In a country of barbarous speech
And the hooter's unspeakable noise:
Not a comrade around me who owns
Very much that is useful to me
They are so unacquainted with drones
Their clothing is ghastly to see.

Dissipation and sponging and loot
And stockings and scent and champagne,
Oh, had I the wings of a coot
How soon I would seek you again!

To be there, with the drinks and the foods,
To be back in the streets of Soho
With a bundle of black market goods
And the smiles of the Sallies I know!

Oh, give me the papers to read
For the news of the friends I have left,
To bring me some word of the speed
Of another encouraging theft!
Do they think of an exile who lives
Far away from the world of delight?
Oh, tell me that somewhere the spivs
Are dreaming about me to-night.

* * * * *

I must up with the lark like the rest.
I must work for my bread all the day,
Yet perhaps even here is a nest
I may feather when evening is grey;
Even here in this desolate place,
For a soul that is trusty and tried
There are coupons to sell, or a case,
Or the chance of a job on the side.

EVOR.

Bargain with a Poet

HIS voice, a reedy affair, came
to me clearly through the thin
party-wall:

"The long white winter is done with.
Softness returns.
There are lambs in the fields to run with
And milk in the churns.
Pimpurnels utter—"

I rapped with my knuckles on the
wall, and there was a thud.
"Is the glass broken?" I asked
curiously.

"It is not."
"This verse of yours," I said. "It's
untimely. Have you no calendar in
there?"

He said he was just hanging it up
again.

"Then take a look at it," I advised,
"and face facts. Listen:

"The long gold summer is over,
Wetness comes back.
There is rime—"

"With an 'h'?"
"No," I said, glad of the inter-
ruption. With an 'i'—"

"There is rime on the quayside at
Dover
And the strings of my racket
are slack."

"Too long," he said. "That last
line of yours."

"It suggests a slackening of ten-
sion," I explained. "And pimpurnels
don't utter, if it comes to that."

I heard him take a pace or two up
and down, but his reply when it came
was hopelessly muffled.

"Take a step to your left," I called
out. "You're talking right into my
Van Gogh."

"So that's it," he said. "Hung on
a two-inch nail?"

"Inch-and-a-half or two-inch," I said
wondering. "Why?"

"I'm using the other end of it. For
a Medici print. Only look here—"
"Well?"

"Couldn't you drive them in a bit
straighter? This one slopes down
rather awkwardly."

"That's funny," I said. "It slopes
up, my side."

"Can we be talking about the same
nail? A thing can't slope two ways at
the same time, surely?"

"I'm no mathematician either," I
told him, and I gave a gentle rap just
over the nail. "This is the one I
mean."

I heard him gather up his Medici and
drop the fragments of glass into some
kind of metal container. Perhaps it
was a fern-pot.

"The point is," he said—and he
sounded sulky—"you've got the head
your side. My end's slippery."

"Well, it's my nail," I said. "Did
you write that thing about milk last
April?"

"I wrote it this morning—so far as
I've got."

"Quite right," I said, reflecting.
"Put it away in a drawer when you've
finished and forget all about it for six
months. Take it out and give it a
final polish about March and send it to
New Writing. The editor's crying out
for a man with your gift. 'Laughter
and poetry,' he says, 'are as necessary
to life as air and water.' He doesn't
mention coal."

He seemed to be scuffling about,
opening and shutting things with tin
lids and moving pieces of furniture to
get at things behind them.

"But I warn you," I added, "he
won't stand for this 'Pimpurnels
utter' stuff."

"It's not 'utter,' it's 'utterly.'"

"Utterly what?"

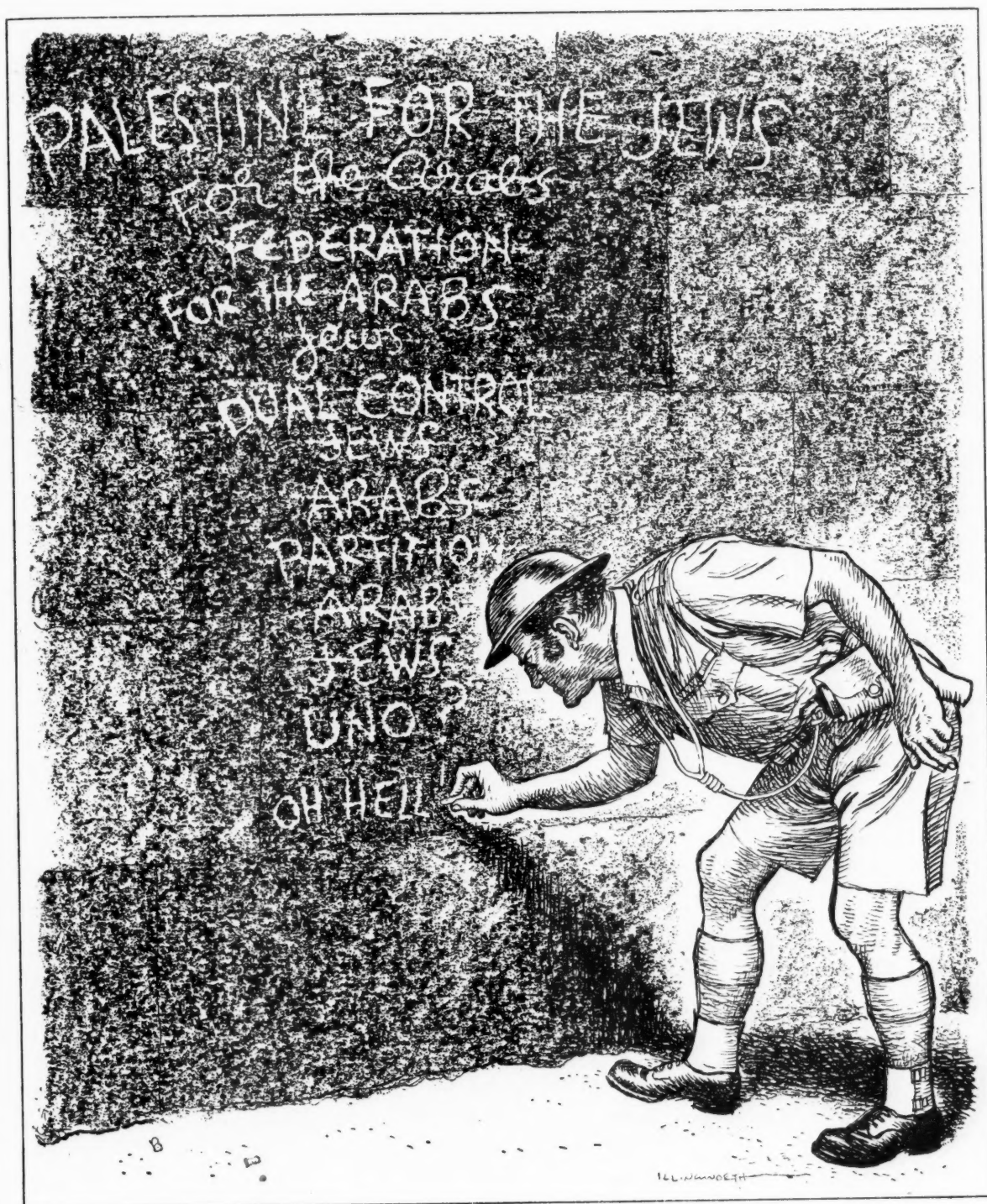
"I don't know," he said sourly.
"I may have to alter that bit."

There was a clatter, as of a pile of golf-
clubs falling off an occasional table.

"I can't quite make out what you
are doing in there," I said. "I'm not
touching the wall this side."

He said he was looking for a nail to
hang his Medici on.

"Right-ho," I said, for I didn't see
that I could very well object. "Only,



THE WRITINGS ON THE WALL



"Actually I had the JOB directed to ME."

if it's all the same to you, do you think you could drive it through about here."

"About where?"

"Here," I said. "I'll show you." And I got a nail and drove it through.

Excitement made his voice rise half an octave. "I say," he cried, "my end's practically straight. I believe it would do—that is if you don't mind, of course."

I told him that that would be quite all right.

"It will save me knocking one in, you see. I'm not much of a practical man, really."

I took "St. Francis and the Birds" out of my cupboard and hung it up.

"Better and better," he cried. "My end's gone up a good quarter of an inch."

I heard the scrape of his Medici print as he poised it on the nail. Then he stepped back, St. Francis rose sharply half an inch and there was a dull thud from the other side. "Tck!" he said.

"Hold on," I said, and I took St. Francis down and substituted quite a ponderous engraving of the Tolbooth, Edinburgh. "Try that."

It worked. Not quite in equipoise, for the Tolbooth had the advantage by perhaps a quarter of a pound. But then, as the man had said, the head was on my side.

"I'm exceedingly obliged to you," he said warmly. "Is there anything I can do for you in return?"

"No," I said. "No, I don't think so. Unless you care to take my advice about that poem."

"You mean cut out the pimperlins?" "That of course. And then perhaps put it right away until the spring?"

He seemed to be considering. "Otherwise," I added, "I may have to rap on the wall again."

Sometimes I fear he may be feeling that I have driven too one-sided a bargain. He doesn't realize of course that I have to look at the Tolbooth, Edinburgh, right through the winter.

H. F. E.

Contact

THE man who had claimed to be called Givvle examined the stitching of his brief-case. "I won't say I can, and I won't say I can't," he said, transferring his pale eyes to the top button of my waist-coat.

"Would you say you might?" I asked.

"I might," he said, and looked hard at my bottle of red ink. "If you follow me."

I followed him perfectly. I had expected nothing. But when a man who has called on me under the mistaken impression that I am a shipping firm lets slip the information that he is "in furniture" I feel that there is no harm in asking. I said as much, and explained again that my only previous offer of a wardrobe, at thirty guineas without fittings, had seemed a poor bargain.

"Very elusive, a nice robe," said Mr. Givvle. "Have to have a contact."

"And have you a contact?"

He rapped his brief-case sharply and inspected the ceiling through a cloud of my smoke. This was not the language of diplomacy. He coughed. He arranged his lips so that his moustache stuck out straight like a paint-brush. He breathed hard through his nose.

"Small gent's robe, was it?" he said at last.

"A small gent's wardrobe, yes."

"What I said." He tested his moustache with the palm of one hand before adding, "Be utility."

"Dockets?" I said.

I believe that he shook his head, but the movement was so slight as to be utterly non-committal. When I began to say something about what you could have got for thirty guineas before the war he stifled the irrelevancy in smoke and moved quickly to the door.

"Ta-ta," he said incongruously, and was off down the corridor.

To avoid disappointment it is best to forget conversations of this kind. I did so. This made it all the more of a shock to receive a telephone call from Mr. Givvle early next morning. He or somebody nearby seemed to be sawing.

"Twenty-seven Bloomer Street, E.C.," he said. "Bit of a contact"—*kwerk-kwoosh*, *kwerk-kwoosh*—"might fix you up"—*kwerk-kwoosh*, *kwerk-kwoosh*—"say you're from Arthur, ask for Ted."

"Thank you very much," I said, "I'll—"

"It's a snip. Ta-ta," said Mr. Givvle, and hung up in a storm of sawing.

A snip has to be snapped up, and half an hour later I found the address in Bloomer Street. The building's windows were blinded with boards and brown paper and there was nothing to suggest that light oak wardrobes lurked behind them.

"... and you know what you can do with them," a thin voice was saying as I entered. It was the end of a telephone call, and the speaker swung round on me with no sign of welcome in his face. He was a tiny, fly-like man and sat under a naked electric bulb at what seemed to be a home-made table. "Corner-cupboards," he cheeped savagely. "Soon tell 'em what to do with them!"

"Stand them in corners?" I suggested. I should have learned by now that the light approach gets you nowhere in business, but I go on making the same old blunders. The man shuffled his feet in shavings and hissed at me.

"Yes-ssse?"

"I'm from Arthur," I said ingratiatingly. "I understand that—" But I had antagonized the man from the start. The mention of my contact only caused him to lie back suddenly in his chair and cry out reedily to someone far away. "Char... lie!" A faint shout of interrogation floated down from the top of the building, and the human insect took a breath that would have burst a very small balloon.

"Them... gate... leg... tables!" he screeched, and cocked an ear for the response.

"Gorn... on... the... flaming... van," called Charlie, and began a tumult of hammering. The fly-like man glowered at three easy-chairs as they emerged from a back room and began to ascend the stairs, upside down and trailing stuffing.

"Speak up," he said to me.

"I'd like to see Ted," I said, speaking up. "About a wardrobe."

"Ain't 'ere," said the man.

"When will he be here?"

"Not knowing, can't say."

"Where is he, then?"

"Gorn on 'is 'olidays."

"How long for?"

He gave a short, falsetto chuckle, and then went serious.

"I'll tell you, an' you can tell Arthur," he said. "Maybe a year, maybe fifteen month, maybe eighteen. On'y took 'im away this morning."

"Took him—!"

He seemed pleased with the effect of this, and lay back in his chair again, waving me into silence with a screw-driver. "Ted's... robe... how... much... Charlie?" he screamed. The spirit voice replied, "Say... thirty... five... pound..."

I was already on my way out, but the fly-like man reached over and hooked my pocket with a set-square, twittering with unexpected affability.

"Nice robe. Cheap, too, considering what it cost 'im. Heavy gent's, mahogany, repolished lovely, seen it meself, make your own arrangements to cart it away."

"No," I said. "Thank you, but—"

"Make a nice present," said the insect. "Or what about a Turkey carpet, bookcase, walnut bedroom suit, nice pedestal for the w.c.?"

"No, thank you."

"Nest o' tables, standard lamp, say?"

"You're tearing my pocket."

"Garden furniture, lino, kitchen cabinet, roll o' roofing felt, I don't care." He paused, looking over my shoulder. "Yes-ssse?" he challenged.

A short man pushed past me. "Bad luck about Ted," he said, and rushed on. "I'm sending a sucker for a gent's robe, Mr. Bebb, and there's two corner-cupboards coming in Friday—"

Mr. Bebb jabbed his screwdriver fiercely into the table and twisted his tiny features into an expression of great contempt.

"This gentleman has 'eard some-think of my views on corner-cupboards," he said, and each word was like the whine of a mosquito.

"Oh, good morning," said Mr. Givvle, turning round and seeing me for the first time.

"Ta-ta," I said, making for the door.

A contact is one thing, contagion another. J. B. B.

Revised Version

"It is only to be regretted that the Indians had kept so quiet about their prowess and hidden their talent successfully under a bushel, as the old Biblical saying goes."—*Times of India*.

"Dramatic Art School (Newcastle-on-Tyne) for Sale: owner going abroad; financial takings excellent."

Advt. in Daily paper.

More than £35?

Council of Walk

"WE could go over the moor," said Rose, "along the upper road—here," and a faint trail of strawberry jam followed her guiding finger, "and spend the night at The George."

We had just finished tea on the terrace, all six of us, and now, with maps spread above the relics, were working out a route for Rose, Timothy and myself to take on our three-day walking-tour. It was my other aunt's idea in the first place, taken up by Rose and Timothy with an enthusiasm which drowned the conventional doubts of my Aunt Jean and the open bewilderment of my Uncle Charles, to whom walking was one of the less desirable methods of exchanging one locality for another on the rare occasions when this was absolutely necessary. My own attitude was strictly neutral. I enjoy walking, but I knew who would have to carry the pack.

"The George doesn't take visitors," said my Aunt Jean, "so perhaps it would be wiser to give up—"

"But surely it does," said my other aunt, interrupting with what would have been called rudeness in a nephew. "I distinctly remember when we stopped for tea there in 1938—"

"1937, surely, dear," said my Aunt Jean, "and we only had tea, with girdle cakes it was, and there was no question of our staying the night."

"No, but there was a young man there who asked for a bed—I heard him

—and I'm sure the woman said yes. And it *was* 1938, because I know I had been worrying about the Czechs, and it was just before Munich."

"Well, all I know is, young man or no young man," said my Aunt Jean with the air of one playing an ace of trumps, "that the Donaldsons wanted to stay there the other day and got a postcard with a view of York Minster saying they were sorry, but they had no accommodation for visitors, with only one 'm' as usual."

Uncle Charles took his pipe out of his mouth. "I am beginning to think," he said, "that Munich was perhaps rather a mistake."

Aunt Jean, who is more used to Uncle Charles than the rest of us, and was in any case anxious to press home her advantage, was the first to recover.

"So, as The George can't take you, wouldn't it really be wiser to give up the idea?"

But Rose and Timothy had their heads together over the map, and were already far advanced with an alternative scheme to that which was foundering on the rock of the inhospitality of The George. Subdued mutters arose from among the cake crumbs.

"We could cut across by Fairholme . . ."

"Or if we got down to the main road *here*" (more jam) "we could probably get a bus . . ."

"Or hitch-hike . . ."

"Then we could put up at Bickersdale the first night . . ."

"And hop over Thorndale and Bitterdale . . ."

I thought it was time the beast of burden had a say. "No you don't," I broke in. "If we walk we keep along the ridges or along the valleys; if you want to go on a switchback, *go* on a switchback; but if you want to walk—"

The conversation now became general.

"Do you remember the switchback at Olympia in 1921," said my Aunt Jean to my other aunt, "when you bumped your nose on the seat in front and thought you had broken it?"

"It was 1923," said my other aunt instantly; "and it was *you* who thought . . ."

"Anyhow, switchbacks are dangerous things," said my Aunt Jean, turning to me. "I really think it would be much better if you gave up your little plan and stayed quietly here."

I was about to embark on an obvious retort when my Uncle Charles, who had taken advantage of Rose and Timothy's concentration upon a bus time-table to appropriate the map, decided it was time he helped the young people over their little difficulty. In any case he could not afford to agree with Aunt Jean.

"It seems to me," he said, "that if you went over the upper moor along this track marked in red, it would give you a comfortable walk to The George, where you could stay the night. . . ."

In Broad Outline

THE Ministry for the Concentration of British Information came through on the telephone at 9.30 A.M. It was not merely a matter of great importance, but of priority. The Assistant Secretary took the call himself.

Perhaps the Assistant Secretary would not know that Miss Myra Carr was over here, in person, from the States—that she had been commissioned by a welfare organization of her own State to undertake a survey on the social services in England? After Armageddon. She wanted to see the social services of Northern England at work. Could she make a short visit to the Council of Social Service? The Ministry were sure that there could be no better people—

"A short visit," repeated the

Assistant Secretary, catching at the weariness in his voice.

Miss Carr was very pressed. Did the Assistant Secretary know that the Governor of her State took a personal interest in the welfare organization—that his was a voice which counted in the Governors' Conference, which discussed, *inter alia*, aid to Britain and advance selling-points for such a policy in the States? We would all realize, between ourselves, and it was naturally not for record—

"When is she coming, Jenks, to the area?" asked the Assistant Secretary, and his weariness made him almost inaudible.

"We'll bring her round at once," said Jenks, and inadvertently rang off.

The Ministry's office was five minutes away. The Assistant Secretary sent

for the files he wanted that morning and began to work methodically. Miss Carr was shown in at 10.20 A.M.

The Assistant Secretary was a fair-minded man. He acknowledged immediately that she was what the Youth Clubs would term a real smasher. She had "Bubbles" eyes and a Hollywood mouth. Throughout most of his acquaintanceship with her she maintained that set of her head which had put her self-consciously workmanlike hat at an enchanting angle with the square shoulders of her masculine two-piece. She sat down, smiled and unsmiled, and produced a leather notebook and stylo pen all in one movement. The Hollywood mouth operated independently of the rest of her lovely face. It enunciated four points with rapidity and precision.

She wanted to know about social service in North England: she reckoned always to come straight to the fountain-head, which was why she was there. She had to catch a train to Scotland for some paragraphs of her survey at 11 A.M. Of his acquaintance with these parts, would he be kind enough to direct her to a bank? She hadn't all that number of dollars for the railroad by her, right now. She also wanted a candy-store.

"The social services of Northern England is a big question," said the Assistant Secretary mechanically. "As a voluntary body we only touch on a part of them." He looked at her again and came back to life. "We can do the bank, the sweets and the station in twenty-five minutes, if we rush and are lucky. That leaves twelve-and-a-half for the social services. You ask the questions."

"I must tell you how interested I am in what you call pubs over here," she said in an analytic tone. "We haven't got quite any institution like that. Coming through your town of Brumthorpe—would it be the evening of yesterday?—I saw, why, a score of men waiting outside your pubs. Mr. Jenks said they were waiting for 'opening-time.' Is that right? Now, why?"

The Assistant Secretary was abashed to find himself telling her it was because the men were thirsty.

"Who would own your pubs? Are they organized for the benefit of the people?"

The Assistant Secretary began to explain about "tied" houses. An acute awareness of time numbed his mind. He mentioned hotels. For one desperate moment he broached the Carlisle Scheme.

"You have pubs in Carlisle, too? That's most interesting," she said, writing it down.

"We have. But that's not quite my point. You see, in Carlisle the pubs are on different lines—"

"Now, don't you trouble yourself on my account with details. In my country, we're that far removed by the Atlantic rollers, it's just the broad picture we can visualize—you understand?"

She stood up, and the notebook and pen had vanished.

"I am most grateful," she said. "All the time an important official like you, and busy as you must be with all your good works, have given just to me. I appreciate it, surely. I guess you've got something to show us Americans in your pubs."

The Assistant Secretary murmured that there were pubs and pubs. Now,

It's funny, somehow, that the more people enjoy music—



the less they show it—



until, of course, it's safely over.

if she could see some of them; he would be delighted to take her round. But of course she had not the time? She hadn't.

"Do you park your automobile by your office?" she asked.

He escorted her to the car. She said she was happy to know Britain was spending some money on the social services. He placed her in the seat, between the two protruding springs, and secured the door by the loop of string to the knob of the starter-control.

"Standard shift?" she queried, stretching out a nylon ankle that made the Assistant Secretary look away.

"Shift—?" he said, staring ahead. But she was making up her lips.

She was only ten minutes in the bank, in the middle of a Monday morning. The Assistant Secretary put on his most obviously jovial air.

"I hope you find it easier to get money out of us than we do out of you," he said.

"Yeah," she answered.

She flowed into the confectioner's shop with all her visitor's ration-books in one hand and all her English money in the other, her hand-bag left intimately on the seat. She emerged in five minutes, bearing, in addition, two bars of chocolate and six boiled sweets in a large, coloured paper bag.

In humble recognition of a master, he let her cope herself with the queues at the booking-office. She stepped

highly on to the train with three minutes to spare.

"Look," said the Assistant Secretary, who always grew more worried as he became more human. "If you are going to write this survey—"

"That's fixed, way back," she said.

"About those pubs. I do hope you'll qualify a little when you come to write them up. You know, it must be difficult for anyone rather fresh to this country to grasp—"

"Say, you've got me all wrong," she protested. "I'm sorry. I've just worried you on no account at all. Pubs are only one angle. It's where we began, isn't it? And I guess, by all the kindness and help I've gotten over here, I've a pretty fair picture of your social services. In broad outline, you understand?"

As the train grunted out she pivoted her shapely head where she sat in her first-class corner and gave him a brief, abstracted smile. She was already describing in shorthand the social services of the North of England with her stylo pen in her leather notebook.

The Assistant Secretary returned thoughtfully to the office, and of necessity slowly. Would a Community Association and a Centre, or a Council of Social Service and a Community Club, best suit the diversified tastes of Monksborough? The place had a difficult history. He must sound the General Secretary if he could lay hold of him for a moment.



"At the present rate of extraction the National Coal Board should last about seventy-three years."

No Business

OFF the air, the radio comedian (a tall, rather distinguished-looking man with greying hair) said to his stooge: "Did you see what the feller in the *Daily* said?"

"Nah," said his stooge, a short, undistinguished-looking man with no hair at all.

"He said," the radio comedian announced, producing some newspaper-cuttings—"he said 'In the dreary waste of back-chat . . . Well, a lot of stuff about the others on the bill, you know, and then at the end 'But it was a real disappointment to find that the two old troupers who give their name to the show—' That's us," he broke off, kindly—

"I ain't got cloth ears," said the stooge in a hoarse voice. "I can take a hint. I don't need a diagram drawn for me. I got some sense. No need to explain everything to me as if I was someone from the central regions of Tibet."

The other waved a hand. "... to find those two old troupers Witt and Yuma," he went on, "succumbing to the usual temptation to play to the studio audience."

Pause. "Well," said the stooge at length, "you got to get laughs somehow, haven't you?"

"Yes, but don't you see, what he means," said the radio comedian, "is that it isn't fair to the listeners."

The stooge's brow furrowed. "Why isn't it?" he said. "I like to hear people laugh myself when I'm listening. It's cheerful, what I mean. You get a sort of cheery effect. When people laugh, it sounds brighter. Seems to me it's all to the good. Don't he like to hear the noise of good fellowship? Must be a sourpuss. When I'm listening I like to hear a lot of folk enjoying themselves. People laugh, makes me laugh, when I'm listening. It sounds good. What I mean, a good laugh—"

"Yes," the radio comedian interrupted, having grasped the point, "but in a way it isn't fair to the listeners. You know, and I know, that a studio audience 'll laugh at anything at all. Anything at all, unless it's subtle or they

never heard it before. These other fellers too," he went on, holding the cuttings like a pack of cards and dealing two more. "'Witt and Yuma,'" he read from one of them, "'have a certain amount of good material, but how disingenuously they used it! How—'"

"Disingenuously?" repeated the stooge, looking affronted. "Well, you know the fancy words they use, writing," said the radio comedian. "They—"

"Who's going to understand a word like that? I never heard that word before. What's it mean, something like corny? Never came across that word. I don't pretend to be a highbrow," said the stooge, drawing himself up, "but I've got my pride. What do they want to use a word like that for? Seems silly to me, using words like that. Never in all my life—"

"How easily one could tell," the radio comedian interrupted, reading again from the cutting, "'when they were indulging in some antics designed to make the simple souls in the studio audience laugh! This is all very well if one happens to be in the studio audience, but less rewarding for those of us who prefer to keep out of it.' There, that's what Wassname said in his column last week. And on Sunday," he picked up another cutting, "a feller said much the same sort of thing. Well, I see what they mean, you know."

"I don't," said the stooge ill-temperedly.

"It isn't fair to the people who can't see us. We ought to think of them. We ought not to hoke it up so much for the others. What say we do try to do without the business next time?"

"Do without the business?" said the stooge, thunder-struck.

"Just as an experiment. Show we've got some . . . conscience. It's not fair to the listeners, you know: they can't hear it. So what say we try doing without it? Just like at rehearsal?"

The stooge considered. "I dunno. I don't approve of taking too much notice of the critics. Gives 'em ideas. Makes 'em think people take notice of 'em. Besides, I wouldn't know what to do if I can't make my face when you say 'Who?' after I say—"

"Yes you would, o' boy," said the radio comedian easily. "You didn't use your face at the rehearsal, o' boy. It's quite simple. Let's try it. After all, I see what these fellers mean. Radio's a different sort of art, you know, from— Well," he broke off, observing a blank look on his friend's face, "never mind that. Anyway, let's try it this time. Can't do us any harm. If we lose too many laughs in the first two minutes we'll start the business again."

The stooge thrust out his lower lip and said dubiously "All right. We'll try it the first two minutes. No business. No looking at the customers. Nothing the listener can't hear, is that it? Okay."

They tried it. They crept on to the little studio stage rigid with concern to make no gestures at all; they used nothing but their voices; they hardly moved even their necks or eyes; they were alert to prevent the slightest change of facial expression.

They were so constrained, so dead-pan, so spectacularly unobtrusive, that the studio audience began to howl with laughter at the very first sight of them, and hardly stopped throughout the act.

R. M.

No Copy-Cat

"To sell, lovely originally marked Tabby kitten."

Advt. in local paper.

H. J.'s Belles-Lettres

THIS Belle-Lettre collects some impressions made upon me by the study of Literature as written by other authors. Any serious reader knows that sickening hesitation between reading several short books and one long one; there is an honest pride which comes from having read all *The Decline and Fall*, but it means putting a good many eggs in one basket. Another dilemma, equally cornute, is between fashionable and unfashionable writers. If you don't read fashionable writers you aren't in the swim, but by the time you have read them they may have ceased to be fashionable, and some other litterateur may be undergoing revival. "Kierkegaard or Barrie," one mutters anxiously, book-taken in hand. It is as well to choose a really obscure book sometimes—one of Lord John Russell's plays, for example, as quoters of the unreadable are generally assumed to be *au fait* with the entire range of the widely known.

One of my troubles in getting myself well thought of by the Best People is that while I can usually like what I ought to like, I can seldom dislike what I ought to dislike. In the nineteenth century to be omnivorous was a virtue; but alas, in these more etiolated times the great thing is to be discriminating. If you are very discriminating indeed, you distinguish not only between the works of different authors and between different works of the same author, but even between different parts of the same work, the greatest genius producing no more than mere curates' eggs in the eyes of the truly literary. For a time it seemed that Donne and Flaubert were exceptions, but a new generation even more sensitive and subtle has arisen, and patchy is what these writers are now seen to be.

A bit by Mr. Daniel George, which begins "This morning, reading Voltaire's *Dictionnaire Philosophique* at breakfast . . .", has made me realize how very crude my own reading at meals is apt to be. Usually I begin by looking up the food my wife has served in Mrs. Beeton, and then it is time to begin on a newspaper. Luckily they have cut down the number of pages now, so it is possible to get through *The Times* in any three-course meal, provided you go on having cups of tea; but if you read a second newspaper that is apt to link up breakfast with elevenses. Any kind of weekly periodical will carry you well into lunch, and a monthly will spoil your afternoon rest. The evening papers should coincide with tea, and this leaves dinner as the only meal you can be quite certain of devoting to literary study, and then the choice of book depends more on the menu than on anything else: it is easier to read a folio if you are having sandwiches than if you are having asparagus. If the food requires both hands, this being the case with most delicacies provided by my wife, you need something to hold the pages of your book open, and for this purpose a thick slice of bread is better than a roll. In families like mine, where the tradition is all gaiety and a stiff upper lip at meals, deep and concentrated authors are contra-indicated, likewise authors who have had a classical education and use a lot of syntax, while a writer like Ernest Hemingway, who uses little, is no better, because as all his words are much the same you lose the place completely every time you take a mouthful.

I have always been insistent that the literary life of the Twins should start on the right lines, and they are gradually accumulating a shelf of the best books. Whenever Christmas or a birthday comes round, we take down Cazamian and Legouis's *History of English Literature* and tick off another item; so far they have reached John of Trevisa's translation of Higden's *Polychronicon*. Junissimus, on the

other hand, is being brought up to have very crude and lowbrow tastes, which will heighten his scientific interest in the future and make him easier for us to stay with when in frolic mood. The problem does not arise with Secundus, as, by an oversight, we forgot to have him taught to read.

The key phrases among readers change from time to time. You no longer hear "Bookman," "Literary Anecdotes" or "A well-told tale"; and that is a pity, because for many years I have been preparing a miscellany entitled "Casts by an Old Bookworm," and this will now have to be rearranged as "Bibliographica Socio-Pathologica." Here is a handful of extracts from this work in its present form:

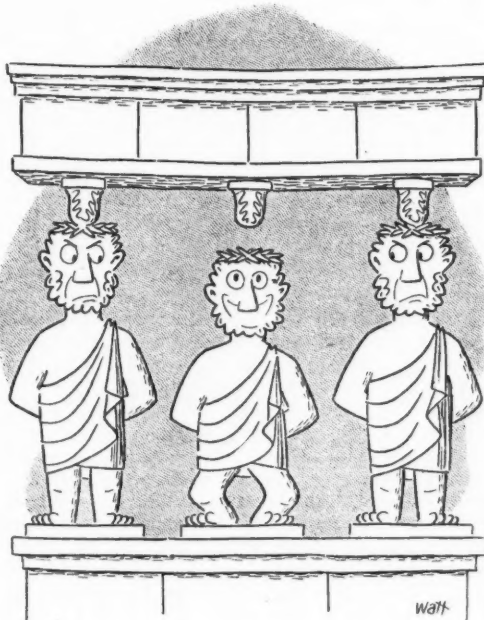
Mr. John Milton sent *Paradise Lost* to the booksellers, saying he would sell only the first serial rights, but when they grew peevish he had back at them with, "Go to, knaves, ye shall have all my rights in the thing for £10, provided ye take *Paradise Regained* as well." Mr. John Milton turned epic writer on his retirement and would often say that two men had ruined the British Civil Service—Mr. Pepys, of the Admiralty Office, with his lust for play-going, and Mr. Izaak Walton, who had set them all fishing.

Samuel Johnson would ever lend his name to a work of literature and he were well paid for it. His vaunted *Dictionary*, so J. Wesley used to say, was really written by a young northern sprig named James Boswell.

The character of Mrs. Bardell, to be found in the *Pickwick Papers* of the ingenious Boz, was taken on Queen Caroline, but much altered to make it secret.

"Conversation" Landor had a secret life known to none of his friends. For six days of the week he lived *en grand seigneur*, but on Saturdays he was a miser.

One evening His Highness the Prince Consort met Thackeray at an Orphans' Benevolent Fund dinner. "So," said the Prince, "for what have you the small Nell so roughly slaughtered? Fie, fie, romancer, the withers of your public thus to wring." "Sir," replied W. M. T., "think what she would have suffered had she lived."



An Innocent in Britain

(Mr. Punch's special correspondent has been on tour to find out how the land lies for visitors from overseas.)

XVI—Home Service

THE Highlands were receding at speed. We had the corridor to ourselves. Mrs. Upscheider, perched on a corner of the Hartman ("airplane construction") travel trunk, seemed lost in thought. Miss Franklin, contemplating the latest addition to her autograph album—the signature of Bruno Walter—seemed lost in admiration. I was lost in *Bradshaw*. It was going to be very difficult to squeeze Belfast, the Lake District, Stratford-on-Avon, Harrogate and several other "musts" into the last few days of our grand tour.

Mrs. Upscheider was the first to find herself.

"I reckon your weather's just about broken," she said. "Your cricket season's over and your crisis is closing in for the kill. I guess we should be on our way."

"There's a boat sailing on Saturday," I said, smothering the sudden anguish in my heart.

Useless to say more: words mirror the emotions so inadequately. So we wrestled silently with our thoughts and the forces making for disequilibrium, hoping for an early visit from the ticket-collector to ease the tension. Only four short months ago Fate had thrown us together without a word of introduction. Now our friendship was a rock against which rumours of default and announcements of inconvertibility could beat in vain . . .

Naturally, I invited my American friends to spend their last days on British soil as my guests. "Your trip will be

We were still arguing the point when we reached the Englishman's castle.

"The first difference between your homes and ours," I said, "is that ours are fenced in."

"Something to do with the enclosure acts and intensive agriculture, I suppose?" said Miss Franklin.

"Possibly. But experience has taught us that the best way of accumulating reserves of scrap-metal is to surround our houses with iron railings. That surprises you? Ah, but it has surprised dictators too in the past . . . Yes, Miss Franklin, nearly all our garages are as small as mine. In your country you build garages to fit the automobiles: over here, they are built round our horse-power tax. I'm lucky of course—I have no car."

"No automobile!"

"No, a man who has a car and a garage to-day is in no better position than a man who has neither. A man who has a car and no garage is very unlucky, but a man who has a garage and no car is among the happiest of men."

"I don't get it!"

"No? Well, let's look inside . . . See how easily I could clear a space for a few logs for the winter or . . . Oh, that! That's a 'Morrison,' Mrs. Upscheider. Yes, the very same spelling. It's a sort of shelter thing we slept under during the war. No use now? Remember, please, what I said about the railings. I don't know whether I should be showing you all this, but put two and two together and you'll realize that Britain is still a force to be reckoned with, eh?"

"The garden is rather nice, isn't it. If only you'd been here a fortnight ago you'd have seen it . . . Under the rockery? Oh, that's the 'Anderson,' Miss Franklin. We slept in it for five nights in 1940. A bit extravagant having two shelters? Perhaps, perhaps. But we did ourselves pretty well during the war, you know. . . . Turning now to the interior . . .

"You will observe that we have no central heating. The idea was tried years ago when the Romans were here and somehow it never quite caught on. No, we prefer the lateral or open-hearth furnace. They are extending their stints now: soon they will be shedding their load."

"Pardon?"

"A mere figure of speech. You see, lateral heating ensures that three-quarters of the house is always ice-cold—which does away with the need for a refrigerator."

"No ice-box! Then what is that low-pitched buzzing noise? Surely . . ."

"That, Mrs. Upscheider, is the wireless."

"Not much pressure is there?"

"You want it louder? All I have to do is to knock sharply on the wall like this . . . in protest . . . and there! You see, it's quite clear now."

"But where's the radio?"

"I'm not quite sure: Mr. Tarbox and I are not on visiting terms."

"Mr. Tarbox?"

"My neighbour. Nearly all suburban houses are what we call semi-detached or lean-to, but their occupants spend most of their lives trying to look *completely* detached. Mr. Tarbox's house is green and cream, you'll notice: mine is black-and-white. Except for the wireless, the postman—who always prefers to thrust his way through the bushes rather than use the garden path—and a few other trifling



"... among the happiest of men."

incomplete," I said, "until you have seen the inside of an English home. You must not judge us only by our hotels."

"You English are among the most hospitable people on earth," said Mrs. Upscheider.

"No, no," I said, blushing, "it is you Americans who are among the most hospitable people on earth."

matters we really are detached. There's safety and strength in numbers and it's awfully good fun not knowing whose telephone is ringing, whose pipes have burst, whose infants have fallen out of bed and so on.

"Now let me show you some of our labour-saving devices. Here's one you *didn't* see at the 'Enterprise Scotland' exhibition. This hole in the wall connects the kitchen with the dining-room. Cutlery, condiments and many other oddments can be passed through it, thus saving much time and trouble. When the hole is not in use the brick can be put back. . . . I know exactly what you're thinking, Mrs. Franklin, but the architect argued against a larger aperture—said it would weaken the main structure too much. Next we have rather a neat idea which makes it no trouble at all to have constant hot water upstairs. We turn on the tap in the kitchen and so set the automatic heater working. Then we run upstairs . . . and turn on the tap in the bathroom . . . so. Then we run downstairs and turn off the kitchen tap. This sets the hot water flowing to the bathroom and we have only to go back upstairs and use it."

"Sounds a bit complicated. Do all English houses have it?"

"Sooner or later. Of course it's much easier with two people working the controls together, one up and one down. . . . Listen! You can hear Mr. and Mrs. Tarbox signalling to each other now. Mr. Tarbox is about to shave, I believe."

"Now I wonder whether you've ever seen one of these things? It's a vacuum-cleaner . . . Oh, you *have*. Well, this is supposed to suck up all dirt, litter, etc. Actually, though, we prefer to do that by hand—when you've cleaned something yourself you *know* it's clean, eh!—but the thing

out each length for inspection. Mrs. Upscheider was delighted.

"I could listen to you English all day," she said. "Your accent is so cute."



Finally, with the tour ticking away relentlessly, I asked my guests whether they would care to make a statement for publication.

"We think it's quite magnificent," said Miss Franklin, "the way you put up with all your difficulties and shortages without squealing. If we had half your troubles we'd squeal plenty. And you may quote me there."

"It's just that we're getting rather hoarse," I said.

"We've had a swell time," said Mrs. Upscheider, "and if Britain's still here next year we'll come back—dollars or no dollars."

"Oh, no, no . . ." I began.

"By the way," said Miss Franklin, "what is this delicious drink?"

"Coffee," I said, hanging my head in shame. Hod.



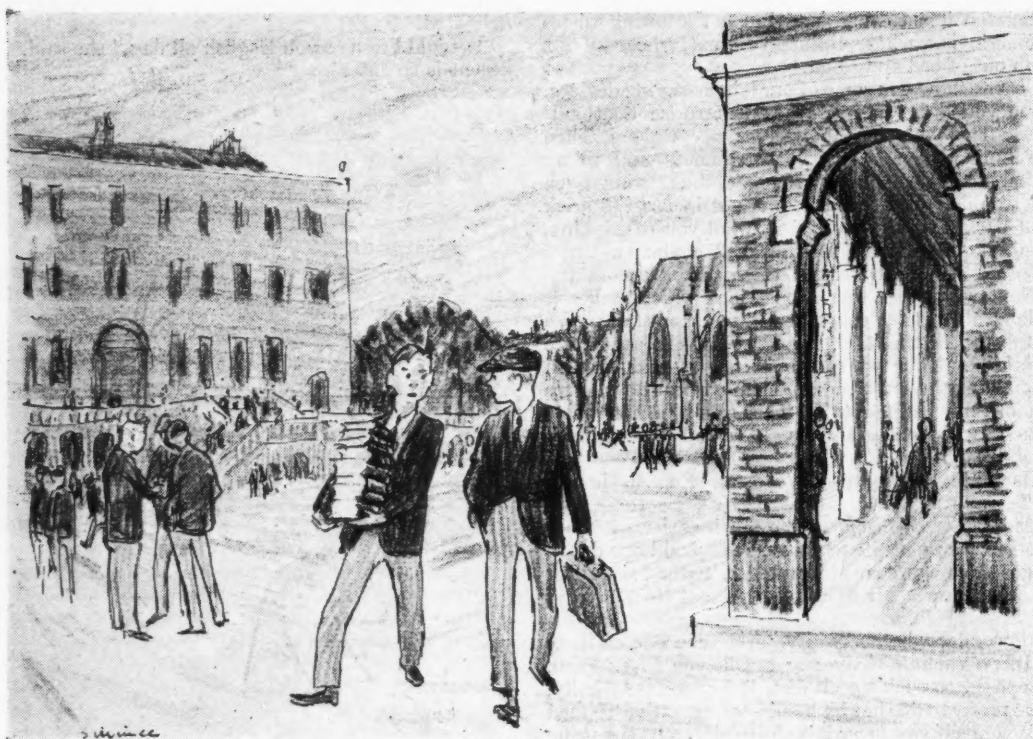
Anderson Perennial

leaves rather a nice pattern on the carpet and makes it look cared-for, if you understand me. You do? Next, we have . . ."

A few hours later when the examination of the *ménage* had been concluded I delivered the last lecture of the course. I unravelled the fabric of English society and held

For Young People's Clubs

H. R.H. THE DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER has graciously promised to be present and give away the prizes at the "Town and Country" Fancy Dress Ball, which takes place at the Royal Albert Hall on Wednesday, October 8th. The Ball is being held in aid of the National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs and the National Association of Girls' Clubs and Mixed Clubs—youth organisations whose activities and needs increase rather than diminish in time of crisis. Dancing continues from 8.30—2.30 and the prizes include a new motor-car. For information about tickets, etc., see the advertisement on page XII of this issue.



"Gosh, Carstairs, what a mess the old country's in! Have you seen this term's ghastly batch of new kids?"

Food for Thought

I LEARN of one who's brought to light
Signs of a race in days of yore
Whose average bones declare a height
Of nine good hefty feet and more,
And frankly own that just at first
(You'll pardon me) I felt coerced
To utter words like Lor'.

How grand, I thought, to be like that,
So long and, in proportion, wide
Which must not be confused with fat;
How nobly one could put on side,
How one would move with massive grace
Annihilating realms of space
With each colossal stride.

But Prudence whispered, Draw it mild,
And all too soon I came to think,
Their sustenance was free and wild,
The ample rivers gave them drink.
For garments, too, they had no care,
A casual feather here or there
Would keep them in the pink.

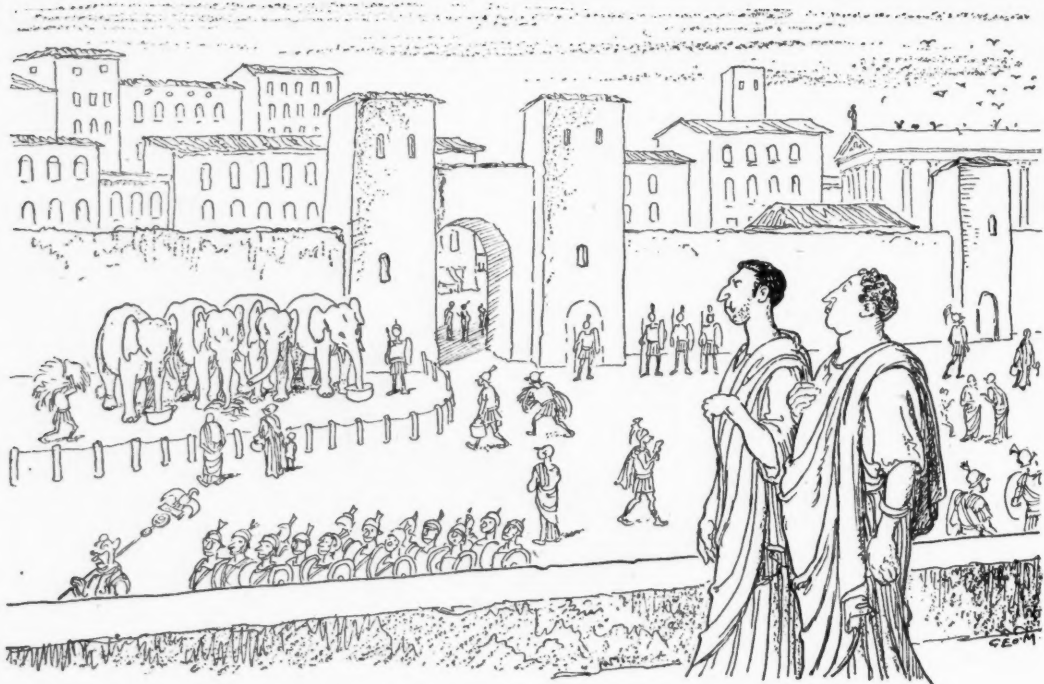
For we, a frail and puny breed;
Here, in our stern financial stress,
May barely fill our natural need
For simple food and decent dress;
Our ration, coupons, points and such
At best do not amount to much
And they are growing less.

To dream that one might be so vast
And doubtless ravening as these
Makes me recoil and stand aghast;
Take anything you like, take cheese,
Nay, all, at one gargantuan bite
A month's supply would vanish quite
As calmly as you please.

And so I put my fancy by
And slower munch my meagre dole
Conscious, if one were nine feet high,
"Twould be deglutinated whole.
Oh, paltry though my inches be,
I find they're good enough for me
While we've a Food Control. DUM-DUM.



SPIRITS OF AUTUMN



"You see what happens! We defeat the Carthaginians in battle and then have to spend all our money feeding their wretched elephants."

A Journalist Remembers.

IX

THERE can be no doubt that it was to his pen that Horatius Shippon McGargle, editor of *The Plough*, owed his enduring fame. *Boll Weevil* and *My Friend the Bull* (a work which nearly cost him his life), had he written nothing more, would have been sufficient to place him in the forefront of English letters. Nowadays, however, it seems to be forgotten that he was valued primarily by his contemporaries as a brilliant conversationalist and raconteur. During my association with him, which lasted for several years, I recorded as faithfully as possible such of his conversation as I was privileged to hear. I now give my notes to the world.

My records begin at a dinner given by Mrs. Trimble, wife of Byron Trimble, the famous leader-writer of *Loam*. Among the company were Mr. McGargle, Mrs. McQuhattie and Harvey McClutch of *The Plough*, Peet of *Byre and Stall*, and Hamish McQumpha of *The Soil*. We talked of humour. McGargle: "Humour usually arises from the association of dissimilar ideas. (To Peet) Name two things in violent

contrast." Peet: "A mad bull and Gray's *Elegy*." McGargle: "Ha, ha! Excellent! Very comical!" He maintained that all great literature should be well seasoned with humour and found fault with De Quincey's *Opium Eater* for its lack of jokes. McGargle: "The reader is apt to throw the book down in a fit of depression, or burst into tears outright. A hearty laugh at suitable intervals, and he might read the whole." Peet: "What about *Paradise Lost*?" McGargle: "What about it?" Peet: "There are no jokes in that." McGargle: "The jokes may not be easy to see, but they are there." Peet: "Name one!" McGargle: "What is a beagle?" (His dexterity in changing the subject was unrivalled, his opponent often being completely nonplussed and bewildered.)

He praised Byron Trimble for his *Frit Fly Over Norfolk*. McQumpha (laughing): "But what would you have said of him had he been with *The Plough*?" McGargle (after a pretty long pause): "I would have said of him, had he been with *The Plough*, what I now say of him as the leader-writer of

Loam, that he is the only genius ever to be associated with the paper!" There was a short silence, and at last McGargle asked McQumpha to repeat his question. McQumpha did so. McGargle: "I would not have said of him, had he been with *The Plough*, what I will not now say of him as leader-writer of *Loam*, that he is the only genius ever to be associated with the paper!" Once more a silence fell. McGargle turned yet again to McQumpha, but Mrs. Trimble, sensitive to the strained atmosphere, interjected some smooth triviality about the weather, and we were soon discussing the nature of thunderbolts.

He would allow little merit to Wordsworth. "In one passage," he said, "describing how, as a boy, the poet rowed by moonlight across a lake, he uses the words 'a huge peak, black and huge.' Passing over the repetition of the word 'huge'—we are not zanyies to have the thing dinned into us in this fashion—why cannot the approximate height of the crag be given? We do not require meticulous accuracy, but let us have 'a peak some two thousand

feet high' and we know where we are. Then, with what can only be described as a desperate attempt at highly-coloured sensationalism, he tells us that the peak 'strode after him.' We have no reason to believe that the behaviour of natural features was any different in Wordsworth's time than in our own, and we know very well that it is not their habit to chase boys across lakes." Trimble: "He said 'so it seemed'." McGargle: "It was his business to stick to the facts. Nothing is gained by giving way to such alarming fancies."

McQuumphra ventured to criticize the large number of subjects other than farming dealt with in *The Plough*. "In one issue," he said, "we have 'Better Barley,' 'Milton—Maestro or Mountebank?', 'How to Make a Ludo Set,' 'Diagonal Ploughing,' 'Levitiation for All,' 'A Model Mill,' 'Heard in the Cow-shed,' and an instalment of the weekly serial which describes a brawl between a farmer and his pig-man over the erection outside the sties of a statue of Byron in swimming costume." McGargle: "Few people realize the extent to which the British farm labourer is devoted to the pleasures of the intellect. A friend of mine who farms near the Scottish border once told me of a conversation he happened to overhear between two of his men. One asked the other where he found recreation after the day's work was done. 'In Carlyle' was the reply. I myself, pausing outside a country inn, have heard the words (I paraphrase out of respect for Mrs. Trimble) 'I'll something well back my unmentionable Homer against yours!' The tone was warm, nay violent, the voice uncultured, but what a revelation! When rural wits are sharpened on translations of the classics, is it too venturesome to expect them to fathom the intricacies of a ludo set?"

Mrs. McQuhattie found no fault with the diversity of subject-matter, but complained of the lack of excitement, glamour and romance. McClutch: "For excitement, you have the fat-stock prices. For glamour and romance, you need look no farther than the serial. Think of the end of last week's instalment, where Seth says, 'Be my wife, and join two of the finest flocks of black-faced ewes in the North of England!'" Mrs. McQuhattie: "I mean something more in the nature of highwaymen dancing on the greensward." McClutch: "Of highwaymen dancing on the greensward?" Mrs. McQuhattie: "Yes." McClutch: "Havers!"

I left with Mr. McGargle, when we broke up shortly afterwards, and he expressed himself as well satisfied with the evening.

From the Chinese

Three Songs of Consolation

I

WHEN you consider
The decline of the sovereign,
The shortage of coal,
You may find it comforting
To reflect
That the Bank of England
Belongs to you
And the coal-mines
Are at last
In your control.

II

It is pleasing, too,
To look into the future
And think
What a row,
What a terrible row,
There will be
When the tides are harnessed
And Water-power,
To say nothing of the Atom,
Replaces coal—
A row, I mean,
Among all those
Whose livelihood
Will be jeopardized
By the new development
Because they are not allowed
To go down the mines
Any more.

III

The Foreign Secretary, at least,
Is to be congratulated.
He wanted to make the passport
Less of a bother.
Very soon
It will give no trouble at all.

The Musicians

THE Musicians, bless them,
Demonstrate
At Covent Garden
Because some Viennese players
Have been permitted to play
Without their permission.
I do not notice
In the same musicians
Any marked reluctance
To play foreign music,
Even American music,
Which costs "hard currency".
Their hearts do not bleed
For British composers
And authors.
Yet these, too,
Have wives
And mothers.

I Ask Myself

I ASK myself:
Why does the Butterfly
Get such a bad Press?
Why is it the butt
Of statesmen
And social reformers?
For it is beautiful,
It uplifts the soul
And decorates the scene:
While the caterpillar,
A depredator,
A thorough nuisance,
And, after all,
The prime cause
Of the butterfly,
Has no place
In the vocabulary
Of political abuse
At all,
And that insufferable
And ugly
Little pest
The ant
Is loaded with praise.
The next thing,
We shall abuse the lily
And despise the rose
Because they are incapable
Of manual labour.

Targets

LI CHUNG FO,
The writer,
Was fond of setting himself
A target.
"Before lunch," he would say,
"I will write a thousand
words."
On a fair sheet of paper,
In bold characters,
He would write
"1,000 words."
Then he would go
Into the garden
And meditate
All morning.
Next day he would say
"I will take a more distant
target,"
And on the fair sheet
He would write
"2,000 words."
This gave him
A sense of well-being
Which warmed his meditation
All day.
He enjoyed life:
But he was not much
Of a writer.

A. P. H.

£

(To the Editor of "Punch.")

SIR,—If it is necessary for printers to depreciate the £ typographically, the process should be carried to its logical conclusion.

When compositors ceased printing Five Pounds as 5*l*. they went in for whacking great £s. The symbol stretched from the top of the A to the bottom of the y, had a well-fitting sash across its ample tummy, and proudly looped the loop before sending forth the long, swishing tail which gave it poise, dignity, and stability. Obviously the £ had terrific purchasing-power.

Then came the £—tall, stately, but not so fully fashioned as its expansive ancestor. Typographically speaking, I suppose the £ was worth 17*s*. 6*d*., or 17*s*. 9*d*. if equipped with tandem handlebars (£).

But what of the £ printed by most publications to-day? Unlike the £ this utility model has no bargain basement; it starts on the ground floor, on

an equal footing with the "h." The width varies: the *Daily Telegraph's* £ is worth about 6*s*. 8*d*. at typographical par, but 5*s*. would be top price for *The Times'* ultra-slender £. Micrometer readings show that the £ used by *The Times* is no wider than the figure 0—and goodness knows why I should have chosen the nought when nine other numerals were available for comparison.

It is only fair to add that this utility model was in vogue before newsprint was rationed, and as the £—beg pardon, £—buys even less to-day it is surprising no one has yet introduced the £. Yet compared with the £ and the £, the ubiquitous £ has something in its favour—it is pinched but commendably upright. And that, sir, is a steady thought in a world of changing values.

Yours faithfully,
PERCE.

A Quantity of Beans

IT all happened a good many years ago; but to me, coming suddenly and unprepared on the bizarre story in the sober pages of *Carver on Carriage by Sea*, every detail presented itself as vividly as it must once have done to the illustrious Carver himself. Not many of us have time to read him right through nowadays—it is not a book you can slip in your pocket—and I make no apology for bringing the strange case of *Notara v. Henderson* before a wider public.

It was in the year 1872 that, as Carver puts it, "a quantity of beans had been shipped in a steamer at Alexandria for Glasgow . . ."

* * * * *

In the historic harbour of the Pharaohs the good screw steamship *Sternfirst** lies alongside the quay. All day the ship has been a hive of activity; now, under the soft Egyptian stars, she lies quiet, and no sound disturbs her calm but the bubbling of the night watchman's hookah and a regular, monotonous thumping from the engine-room, where the Chief is beating a native stoker over the head with an iron firebar. In his cabin the captain is writing a letter to his owners. "My dear sirs," he has begun, "we sail at dawn to-morrow—"

The silence of the night is broken by

a raucous hailing. The captain pauses in his work and looks out of the port-hole, then resumes his writing. He has just added the words "weather permitting" when there is a knock at his door and the mate, a hulking, black-browed giant of a man, enters the cabin. "Beg pardon, Captain —," he says.

"Well, Mr. Gable?"†

"There's a boatload of cargo alongside, sir."

"Cargo, Mr. Gable? What sort of cargo?"

"Beans, sir."

The captain twirls his moustache. "Beans, you say, Mr. Gable? Then stow 'em in the hold."

"The hold's full, sir."

"Full, is it? Full, eh? Then put 'em in that sort of loft place at the bottom of the first flight of stairs."

"In the 'tween-decks, sir?"

"Those are my orders, Mr. Gable."

"Aye, aye, sir." The mate goes out and the captain turns again to his interrupted task. "All our cargo," he writes, "is safely in the holds, with the exception of a parcel of beans which I am stowing in the 'tween-decks . . ."

* * * * *

The voyage was uneventful until, some weeks later, the *Sternfirst* arrived, not at Glasgow but at Liverpool.

† An alias.

Carver does not think it necessary to comment on this slight error; both places, after all, are large, greyish cities on the right as you go up the Irish Sea. Anyone might have done the same. No time was lost in putting to sea again; but "on coming out of the Mersey," says Carver, "the ship was injured by collision with another steamer and" (this is the crucial point) "the beans were wetted . . ."

Mersey River . . . a moist, grey dawn breaking over the mud flats; a thin mist curling over the turbid waters; sirens hooting as the big ships glide slowly down the river. Aboard the *Sternfirst* an ordered activity reigns; the mate, hoping to distract the men's attention from the recent navigational contretemps, has set the starboard watch to polishing the funnel, while the port watch are busily holystoning the hatch-covers. An apprentice, whom we will call Charteris, is at the wheel; the captain himself is on the bridge, scanning the horizon with a telescope.

Suddenly there is a cry from forward: "Steamer on the port bow!"

"Steamer on the port bow, eh?" says the captain briskly. "Bless my soul, so there is! Mr. Charteris!"

"Aye, aye, sir?"

"Avoid that steamer, Mr. Charteris."

"Port or starboard, sir?"

"Don't bandy technicalities with me, sir," says the captain hotly. "This is no time for a display of nautical pedantry. Get out of that ship's way!"

"Aye, aye, sir," says the boy doubtfully, beginning to turn the wheel.

"Not that way, you fool!" cries the captain. "Turn it anti-clockwise! You men in the front end! Get ready to push that steamer off! Full astern! Lower the anchor! Man the lifeboats!"

But it is too late; all the captain's seamanship cannot prevent a collision now. The two ships pass side to side, scraping a considerable quantity of paint off each other and breaking one of the *Sternfirst's* portholes. From his bridge the master of the other ship shouts words that bring a blush to Mr. Gable's cheek and cause the captain, speechless with rage, to throw his hat on the bridge and jump on it. . . .

It is not known at what stage it was discovered that the beans had got wet, nor who made the discovery; it might have been Apprentice Charteris . . .

"Excuse me, Captain . . ."

"Well, what is it now?"

"I've just been looking at the beans, sir, and—"

"Looking at the beans! Looking at the beans! D'you think I've nothing to do but listen to a left-handed, red-eared, dog-faced, ullage-swilling spawn

* That was not her real name.



"What are you having next, George—meringue pie, apple charlotte and cream, or some chocolate éclairs?"

of a plumber's mate telling me he's been looking at the beans?"

"No, sir."

"Then go and——"

"Please, sir, the beans have got wet, sir."

The captain's face, at first bright crimson, changes slowly to puce and then to mottled purple; his mouth opens and closes, but no sound comes forth.

"Please, sir," says Apprentice Charteris, "do you think the beans ought to be dried, sir?"

The captain sits down heavily and strikes his head several times against a brass-bound sea-chest. His hands pluck feebly at his collar. Finally he speaks.

"Yes, Charteris. By all means, my boy. Certainly the beans must be dried. Just step along to Mr. Gable's cabin, will you, and ask him, with my compliments, if he'll lend you a few of his hand-embroidered, monogrammed lace handkerchiefs to dry 'em with. Will you do that?"

"Aye, aye, sir," says Charteris,

mystified but obedient; and off he goes. Presently a scuffling is heard, shouted orders, and the sound of a body being dragged up the companion-way; then, after a short interval, a regular bumping under the ship's keel. A faint smile overspreads the captain's haggard features as he takes his pen and writes in the ship's log: "Tuesday, 11 A.M. Keelhauled Apprentice Charteris."

As Carver succinctly puts it: "No steps were taken to dry the beans."

* * * * *

The latter end of these vegetables is veiled in obscurity. We know that they had (in Carver's own words) "suffered much additional damage" by the time they were discharged; we know too that the Exchequer Chamber, which heard the case, held that "the beans ought to have been dried." More than this we are not told. Carver himself, after recording the above-mentioned judgment, simply puts a row of dots, and starts off again:

"Plaintiff was the owner of seventy-two chests of indigo . . ."

But that, I surmise, is another story.

The 'Taters

(Overheard in a Kentish Inn.)

"THEM Jarge taters."

"Ah!"

"I likes 'em."

"Ah."

"I likes the shape on 'em."

"Ah."

"'Tis a fine shape, take 'em as you will."

"Ah."

"An' the colour. Not white they ain't, and not yellor."

"Sort o' yellery-white, I reckon."

"Ah. That's it—or whiter-yeller."

"Ah. I 'ad some weighed 'arf a pound or better."

"So did I. 'Arf a pound or better they wos. Some on 'em."

"Ah. Fine shape they is too an' all."

"Ah."

"An' the eyes, deep-set an' brown."

"Brown—that's right. 'Tis a wunnerful shape."

"'Tain't an eatin' tater, mind yer."

"No. 'Tain't an eatin' tater."

FOR a capital city Edinburgh is limited in its theatres, which seems the chief reason why the Festival has provided so much more variety in music than drama. What we were given was certainly worth having, and to capture M. LOUIS JOUVET and his players from the Théâtre de l'Athénée was an excellent initial coup; but though the Festival is very much an international

At the Play

Edinburgh Festival—Child's Play (ARTS)—School For Spinsters (CRITERION)

with an expenditure of energy which would make the Battersea Power Station look anxiously to its gauges. His attack is a whirlwind of oratory and gesture, of chuckling and roaring, of asides made doubly confidential

by astonishing tricks of mouth and eye, of tripping and kicking and all sorts of petty misadventure; and the only moments of repose are when his young competitor takes a trick in pursuit of *Agnès* and he collapses, looking like some wounded bird of prey, groaning into his hat. As a physical feat it must be equivalent to swimming the Channel, as a style of comedy it may lack something in relief, but there is no doubt of its timing and polish and of the laughter it compels. *Agnès*, a child straight from a convent but mistress by instinct of every weapon

in the feminine armoury, is taken with much charm and freshness by Mlle. DOMINIQUE BLANCHAR, whose reading of the matrimonial maxims in the manner of an elocution lesson is as funny as is the entry of *Enrique*, his energies sapped by fortune-making in America, in a sedan-chair carried distastefully by a cohort of Red Indians. *Arnolphe's* rival, *Horace*, is played in lively kind by M. JEAN RICHARD, and the minor parts are all in skilled comic hands. As for M. CHRISTIAN BERARD's witty set, in which two walls open before our eyes to disclose an absurd little garden and shut scissors-fashion to put us outside in the street, my delight in it was tempered by the fact that when it was shut and running down the stage like a breakwater a lot of the action was invisible unless one happened to be sitting in the middle. And I wasn't.

escaped there was always ample consolation in the magnificence of M. JOUVET's production. A fantasy based on the German fable of *DE LA MOTTE FOUQUÉ*, in which a water-sprite is permitted by submarine authority to wed a mortal knight on condition that infidelity will bring him death, its mounting tragedy, ending in a tremendously impressive third act, is heightened by romantic feeling which the sophisticated humour of the author of *Amphitryon 38* secures from the least trace of sentimental whimsy. The two worlds of fact and fancy, already easily bridged in poetry, were further merged in M. TCHELITCHEW's elaborate sets, where massive arrangements of walls and pillars, seen against a sharply raked stage, revealed magic properties of light and set the eye grotesque exercises in perspective. A restrained and very different M. JOUVET used his fine voice and powerful presence to dominate these sombre scenes, but the performance of the evening was that of Mlle. BLANCHAR, who brilliantly sustained the character of the poised but still elemental nymph through deeply moving passages of a length to make any actress quail. For a girl of eighteen it was a triumph. Many members of a large cast should be praised, but especially M. MAURICE LAGRENÉE as the *King of the Water-Sprites*, M. MICHEL ETCHEVERRY as the *Chamberlain*, M. PIERRE RENOIR (son of the painter) as the *Judge*, WANDA as *Bertha*, and M. GEORGES RIQUIER as the *Superintendent of the Theatre*. The dresses, also by M. TCHELITCHEW, fitted arrestingly into the complex pattern of the play.

Across the Forth but still under the umbrella of the Festival, HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL's version of *Everyman* was to be found, in English, in the lovely setting of the nave of Dunfermline Abbey. The play had rightly been cut, but I think the operation could with advantage have been more drastic, for some of the later scenes are less dramatic and in them Mr. RICHARD AINLEY failed to bring quite enough variety to the fine voice and deep sincerity with which earlier he had held us. Many felicities of lighting and music had been contrived by Mr. JOHN HANAU, perhaps the best the gradual fade-out at the banquet as *Everyman* first feels the approach of *Death*. This was uncannily effective. A cast which included such seasoned players as Miss RUTH MAITLAND, Mr.



[School For Spinsters]

SCHOOL FOR FATHER

Hamilton Harding MR. JULIEN MITCHELL
Tom Harding MR. DEREK BLOMFIELD

occasion, and will doubtless become more so, it was a pity no room could be found for a Scottish play, and it is to be hoped that next year some native product will get an airing, even if, like most of the nicer things in the shop windows, it has to be labelled "For Overseas Visitors Only."

L'Ecole des Femmes was fun from many points of view, and not least because Molière is seen too seldom over here. Its delicious mockery of worldliness outwitted from behind a mask of artless innocence and the broad sweep of its burlesque give opportunities for by-play which this distinguished French company exploited superbly. Wearing green plus-tuos and the kind of hat under cover of which our mothers went to church, M. JOUVET plays *Arnolphe*, the egotist who insured against cuckoldry by putting his intended wife into rigorous training from the age of four,

JAMES RAGLAN, Mr. HAROLD SCOTT and Mr. KYNASTON REEVES acquitted itself well, and it was a stroke of genius to cast Mr. MACKENZIE WARD as *Everyman's* wayward friend. My one solid quarrel with the production was that *Good Deeds* looked exactly like a Walt Disney bride, in an enviable evening-dress and a still less mediæval perm.

Also I spent a happy morning watching the LANCHESTER MARIONETTES, accompanied by madrigals recorded by the NEW ENGLISH SINGERS, play an adaptation of VECCHI's *L'Amfiparnaso*. These little people are so utterly charming that when the curtain falls it is impossible to believe they have gone back into boxes and not out to search, like the rest of us, for lunch. Everything in the show bears the hall-mark of artistry of an infinitely patient kind. As much as the opera I liked the spirited harpsichord solo of a certain brooding Mme. GIACONDA, and I remain unconvinced that she was not in fact staying in my hotel.

Back in London. In *Child's Play* at the Arts Mr. REGINALD BECKWITH, who has the happy knack of being serious while remaining frivolously human, makes out a surprisingly good case for his contention that, for the child's sake, some homes are better broken up. He takes an unhappy woman through two generations, and when her daughter-in-law is undecided whether to leave her husband, who is a psychiatrist's dream, she astonishes her by insisting that her small boy will be happier if she goes. She confesses that she had come to hate her son for tying her to a brutal husband, and had afterwards ruined the boy's character with overdoses of the clinging love which she had felt to be his due.

The weakness of Mr. BECKWITH's particular instance seems to be that the future of the boy in question, who is left dependent on a kind but dithering jelly of a father, could scarcely anyway be darker; but in its general application his argument is more impressive, and it is at least an honest approach to one of our most insoluble of muddles. There is one exceedingly funny scene in which the neurotic husband, a mordant humorist, lavishes hospitality on his dumb and muscle-bound rival. As the first, Mr. HUGH BURDEN gives a subtle and imaginative performance, while Miss RUTH LODGE as the mother and Miss ELIZABETH KENTISH as the wife support him ably. A sound production, by Mr. NORMAN MARSHALL.

Mr. ROLAND PERTWEE's *School For Spinners* at the Criterion shows signs of a laudable intention of discussing the maiden lady's special problems, almost entirely fails to do so except in the shallowest way, and boils down to a very old-fashioned domestic comedy ending in mechanically-concocted farce. If there were many men about in 1900 like the lay-preaching monster at the head of this family, then spinsterhood must have been overwhelmingly attractive. Mr. DEREK BLOMFIELD as a bonhomous medical student comes out with flying colours, and Miss IRIS HOEY pleasantly represents those universals, the Unselfish Aunts. ERIC.

Music in Edinburgh

MUSIC-LOVERS who were fortunate enough to be in Edinburgh for the full three weeks of the Festival could, provided their musical and physical digestions withstood the prolonged strain, hear about forty concerts given by six famous orchestras and innumerable soloists and chamber music players. They could also see the Sadler's Wells Ballet and hear two operas given by the Glyndebourne Opera Company. The production of VERDI's *Macbeth* will long be remembered for the superb performance given by MARGHERITA GRANDI as Lady Macbeth. With her beautiful voice (London remembers her *Tosca*), her regal looks and bearing, and her great stage personality she put *Macbeth* in perspective, for Lady Macbeth is not only the centre of the drama, she is the drama. One saw the bat-like witches as embodiments of her evil desires and ambitions and Macbeth as her instrument. The lurid sky was her blood-lust, the gloomy castle courtyard her dark designs; and in the twin portcullises that closed behind Duncan and his train one saw the relentless tiger-claws of her insatiable desire for power.

VERDI's fanatical Lady Macbeth is not the same calculating monster that we know in Shakespeare, for her fire and passion are Latin. In the banquet scene Madame GRANDI depicted a woman half crazed, and the unholy triumph in her voice as, in the midst of barbaric splendour and with her jewelled crown on her head, she gave the toast of honour provided the most thrilling experience. The sleep-walking scene was a terrific performance too. The whole production was a triumph alike for Madame GRANDI, CARL EBERT the producer and CASPAR

NEHER the designer. BERTHOLD GOLDSCHMIDT conducted.

The other Glyndebourne production was *Le Nozze di Figaro*, with ITALO TAJO in the title-rôle. He was a little disappointing, for he is too tall and his fine voice of too dark a quality for Beaumarchais's sprightly barber turned valet. The production was charming to look at, but the only outstanding performance was that of the Cherubino (GIULIETTA SIMIONATO)—the page-boy who falls in love with every woman in sight. This Cherubino not only sang beautifully, but was a piquant mixture of femininity and boyishness, impertinence and pathos, precocity and *naïveté* such as one dreams of in a Cherubino but rarely sees. The neat, dapper little figure in eighteenth-century dress looked very comical with a huge bearskin perched precariously over one eye goose-stepping round the stage with the outsize Figaro, who made the most of his recital in the famous aria "Non piu andrai" of the rigours of the army life that awaited this miniature fop. But that all was not well musically with this production was evident from the fact that the last two acts seemed interminable. For this the roughness of the orchestral playing was largely to blame. WALTER SUSSKIND conducted.

The Festival closed, as far as I was concerned, in a blaze of glory to the sound of the peerless Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in a performance of MAHLER's *Das Lied von der Erde*. BRUNO WALTER conducted this symphonic song-cycle, and KATHLEEN FERRIER and PETER PEARS were the soloists. It was preceded by an exquisite performance of SCHUBERT's "Unfinished," that "came o'er the ear like the sweet sound that breathes upon a bank of violets."

Das Lied von der Erde is the golden sunset of the romantic period and the most complete expression in the whole of music of Man's grief at his own evanescence. In it MAHLER unfolds his vision of the universe and of all beauty in colours luminous with agony, and in the *Abschied* a knell tolls as if for the whole of Creation. Days afterwards I still seem to hear that haunting, heartbreaking farewell, and KATHLEEN FERRIER's glorious voice singing "Ewig . . . ewig . . . ewig . . ." across time and space. D. C. B.

Steady Job

"Wanted by bright young couple, capable nannie, one baby a year—permanent." Local paper.



"Look at this, Miss Jones—another wevehadit among the whodunits."

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Laurels for the Brontës

ON the centenary of the publication of *Jane Eyre* the Brontës naturally come in for celebration and reassessment. Neither makes any difference to the Miltonic quality of their fame; but both, one hopes, will open new eyes to its lustre. A hundred per cent. Celtic in a West Riding of Saxons and Danes, the Brontë genius is, like most mystical manifestations, the product of tensions; and as such it has been analysed and illustrated by Miss PHYLIS BENTLEY with remarkable sympathy and good sense. *The Brontës* (HOME and VAN THAL, 6/-) undoubtedly suffers from a hangover from the orgy of exalting Emily at Charlotte's expense indulged in a few years ago; and the author's theory that the more reality is transmuted by imagination the better the novel, not only gives the palm to *Wuthering Heights*—to be shared, one presumes, with *The Castle of Otranto*—but exalts *Jane Eyre* above *Villette*. Yet Miss BENTLEY's book will repay reading and re-reading, even by those connoisseurs who share Swinburne's opinion of the supremacy of *Villette*. Hers is not the only Yorkshire tribute to "the most remarkable family in the history of literature." This claim—difficult enough to deny—is stoutly made in a *Brief Life of the Brontës* (MILLMORE, 5/-) by Mr. ROYSTON MILLMORE. He, like Miss BENTLEY, notes the "impressive duality" that heredity and environment produced in the whole family, and is at his best in substantiating their Yorkshire background and guiding the Brontë pilgrim to what remains of it.

H. P. E.

The Lowells

In *The Lowells and Their Seven Worlds* (ERNEST BENN, 21/-), Mr. FERRIS GREENSLET has attempted, in the form of

a book on a great American family, "a history of the heart, mind, imagination, animal spirits, and pocket book of New England." Percival Lowle, Old Percival as he was later called, left Bristol in 1639 to seek "liberty of thought and action" in the New World. By the beginning of the eighteenth century Boston was a thriving place, and henceforth the Lowells became increasingly important and prosperous. There was the Rev. John Lowell, an able rather than a zealous divine, who made purchases of real estate that turned out well. There was the Old Judge, who married three times and left a large fortune. There was Francis Lowell, who, though only forty-two at his death, revolutionized cotton manufacture in the States, and, in Mr. GREENSLET's opinion, did more perhaps than any other man to shape the economic future of New England. Twenty years or so after his death, round about 1840, John Amory Lowell launched the Lowell Institute, which attracted eminent lecturers from Europe as well as from the other States. His distant cousin James Russell Lowell was the famous critic and poet, and one of the most successful and accomplished ambassadors the United States has sent to England. And, finally, there is the dynamic Amy Lowell, voluminous biographer of Keats, and founder with Ezra Pound of the Imagist movement, which had two slogans, War on the eloquent, Death to the cliché.

H. K.

"My Daughter Fan"

Whether Charles Kemble's Fanny was or was not a great actress or a great beauty (she was probably both "on her day"), she was certainly a rich, indeed an enchanting, personality, and Mr. HENRY GIBBS deserves our gratitude for his *Affectionately Yours, Fanny* (JARROLD, 18/-), showing her to us (mainly through her letters to her friend Harriet St. Leger) as clever, sensitive, imaginative, moody, critical not only of her own talent and performance, but of the trivialities and exhibitionisms of her trade, an affectionate and self-sacrificing daughter, compassionate to English waifs and Georgian negroes, independent in an age of feminine subservience, preferring Stephenson to Alvanley for conversation and Shakespeare whole to Shakespeare mangled, observant and shrewd in judgment, and a born writer with a natural sense of style. It was unwise of our author and editor to refer to a "truly atrociously framed sentence" of his heroine's. Fanny wrote with a racing pen and did not "frame" sentences. Mr. GIBBS does—as thus: "The period of youth would be sadly dull without such bright flashes in the everyday pan and very gruesome if each flash were mistaken by others for the thunder-clap of domesticity. Fanny had flirtations, it may be prayed, but they were flirtations, not the sultry empurpled passions they have been surmised." Notwithstanding this sort of thing, Mr. GIBBS has given us an interesting book, and he knows his early-nineteenth-century stage.

J. P. T.

Owner-Builder

Home-Made Home (FABER, 10/6) is not a text-book, but an amplified answer to a serving soldier's letter asking how he was to get an English home of his own when he came back. The home was to be his own by purchase—and not one of a series of mass-produced units. It was to reflect his tastes and his children's tastes. It was to start small, but good of its sort, with an eye to enlargement and embellishment as thrift and skill were brought to bear upon it. The answer to all these natural demands—which only seem extravagant because England has been so cruelly denatured—is to be

found in Mr. RONALD DUNCAN's practical and inspiring book. He has performed the feat himself in a propitious district of stone houses and cob cottages. But nearly every part of England produces its own building materials, from chalk to granite; and the author's staple is *pisé de terre*, earth rammed between wooden casings, for which eighty per cent. of our soils are suitable. The home envisaged is to be almost a subsistence holding, whatever be the trade of the head of the family; and for every man and woman strong and brave enough to plot the recapture of what was once the Englishman's castle, this is the book.

H. P. E.

Stanley and Emin Pasha

The Remarkable Expedition (HEINEMANN, 15/-), an account of Stanley's rescue of Emin Pasha from equatorial Africa, is a very fine book which deserves to become a classic in the literature of exploration. The historical background is clearly sketched, the descriptions are vivid and brief, and above all the characters of the story are living beings, drawn with deep understanding. After the fall of Khartoum in 1885, Emin Pasha, a German naturalist whose real name was Eduard Schnitzer, was isolated in Equatoria, to the governorship of which he had been appointed by Gordon. He was cut off from civilization by the dervish forces which had killed Gordon; his predicament gradually worked on the public imagination of England, and eventually Stanley, the greatest African explorer of the age, was sent to rescue him. Stanley's special interest in the Congo made him prefer to start from the west of Africa instead of the east, and in order to reach Emin Pasha he traversed the whole of the Congo State. The immense difficulties of this enterprise, and the complicated sufferings and misadventures of Stanley's inexperienced companions, are brilliantly described by Miss OLIVIA MANNING. But the highest point of interest is the meeting between Stanley and Emin Pasha, who had no desire to be rescued and bitterly resented being deprived of his governorship and carried off to Egypt. Stanley was a mixture of savagery and sentiment. Emin Pasha was vain, charming, intelligent, and comparatively easy to dominate. The resulting clash provides a theme which Miss MANNING has treated as it deserves.

H. K.

A Cracker in Whitehall

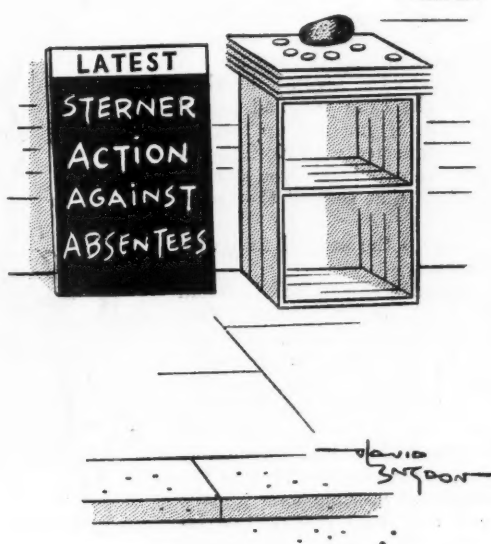
Nobody who had the misfortune to work in a Ministry during the war should miss Captain CYRIL FALLS' *The Man for the Job* (METHUEN, 9/6), which can be guaranteed to give unkind delight to any prepared to view without prejudice the strange bureaucratic ferment that seethed in all Ministries, but particularly in those vast amorphous mushrooms often bearing so obliquely on the progress of the battle. The author is better known for his mastery of tactics in a larger field, but no wile in the shifting technique of the amateur Whitehall empire-builder seems to have escaped his judicial eye. His hero, an ineffective but charming young man with a vague knowledge of a proprietary metal, falls into the hands and later into the arms of an ambitious secretary who knows her way about the crazy warrens, and before he can prevent it he finds himself rising dizzily on a bubble-department which carries him, until nausea compels him to deflate it, to rank and honours. The writing is light, the satire sure, the romance very dryly applied, and there are many funny passages in a book which those underpaid and over-driven pillars of society, the senior civil servants, will probably enjoy as much as most.

E. O. D. K.

And Worse Next Time

It Might Happen Again (HEINEMANN, 18/-) is the second volume of Admiral of the Fleet Lord CHATFIELD's autobiography, *The Navy and Defence*, and deals with the period between the two wars up to the time when he was Minister of Defence and made "when it was all but too late" (to quote his publishers) "a last moment effort to prepare the three Services for War." The book begins with the story of the Washington Conference and ends with a postscript, commenting on the Government's White Paper, "Central Organisation for Defence," October 1946, which, so the author says, "fails to remove United Kingdom defence from party politics or to proclaim that the safety of the country is a first charge on the national income, and fails to establish the importance of educating our future statesmen, and our citizens, in defence matters." No book could have come out at a more timely moment than now when the axe is again falling on the Navy, no book could issue more serious warning or contain less recrimination or show a more selfless devotion to the great need of the country. Many questions are discussed—the controversy over capital ships, training of personnel in sail ("Men must be trained in the atmosphere of the weapons with which they are to fight . . . There is a modern seamanship as well as an old") and the problem of submarine abolition which was mooted at the Washington Conference and objected to by the American Women's Legion! The foreword deserves quotation—"If we do not mend our ways: if we fail to construct a better way of ensuring the country's safety: . . . if we are unwilling to pay an adequate insurance premium, we may live more comfortably, but we shall live dangerously, and one day it will all happen again."

B. E. B.



Luff Interest

I

ON the sea wall above us, digesting in a blue cloud of tobacco-smoke, sat a row of twelve-footer enthusiasts. Nice fellows all, though fanatics. Not a man among them but could make fast his throat halyards with his eyes close-hauled and a reef in both thumbs.

"Don't you think we could wait till they've gone out?" asked my first officer plaintively.

"By the time they've finished telling each other how Fotheringay swallowed a spinnaker in the Fastnets in '07 my courage will have ebbed. So will the tide."

"Are you sure you know which rope to pull?"

"I had an hour with Young Bob this morning and the whole thing is perfectly clear. Well, perhaps not perfectly clear, but the general principles seem cut and dried."

"I can't think why it should go against the wind," she objected.

"Nor can I," I said. "So let us breast the main."

This was of course one of those graphic figures of speech which are well known to be as much second nature to us mariners as the salt on our eyelashes, for in fact the main was several miles away down the estuary; but it had its local representative in a tide which spent its time racing madly up and down. From the village staithe you could easily throw an oath across the water, and in this narrow space many costly and highly-polished shallows rode thickly at anchor.

"What do we do first?"

For the moment the answer escaped me. Instinct said that if you launched out before putting up the sail the bill might mount to several hundred pounds by the time you had gained control, while if you put up the sail when still connected with Norfolk you were out of control before you started. On the whole that seemed the better way round.

"We put up the sail," I said with determination.

Two things about *Sara Ann* had already struck me as peculiar. One was the extraordinary extent to which her most vital arrangements depended on pieces of decayed string, the other was the quantity of clothes-line lying about the floor in heaps. While still with Young Bob I had fortunately made some notes on the back of the milk bill about possible uses for the stuff, and now with one or two insignificant mishaps such as notoriously

attend the rigorous life of the seafarer we persuaded the sail to stay aloft. If you are good at parcels it helps. The breeze, an active one, immediately got its teeth into the canvas and *Sara Ann* began to squirm irritably.

"What next?" asked the first officer, whose face was not bleeding very badly.

"You squat in the bilge and undo that skein of clothes-line the moment I shout."

"Does it serve any useful purpose?"

"It lowers the centre-board and that scrapes on the bottom," I said, laughing to think of Drake and Frobisher being subjected to such a questionnaire. I was paddling barefoot among a rich submarine deposit of sardine cans and broken bottles, and I began to see that starting up a bronco was nothing to getting *Sara Ann* into her stride. Holding the reins in one hand I tried to fix on the rudder with the other, realizing what an important part it had to play. For what seemed a long time I was rather busy, but at length I wrenched the anchor from the alluvial slime and, thrusting bravely forth, fell uncertainly into the back or driving seat. The events of the next few seconds are still a little confused in my mind. I had expected to pull the sail smartly into the tacking position so as to steer out into mid-stream, but the more I drew in the relevant clothes-line the slacker grew the sail. I had also expected to put on a good deal of rudder, but I now found this to be impossible, lacking a tiller. These

two matters were therefore engaging my earnest attention when we caught the *Mallard*, a brand-new racing boat, a glancing blow which shivered a foot or two of her beautiful timbers and set her owner, a gorilla-like man, dancing curiously on the spit.

"We've broken our duck, anyway," observed the first officer acidly.

"Let down that thing!" I roared.

Off the wounded *Mallard* we cannoned heavily—for *Sara Ann* was of robust construction and the tide running strongly—into a shell-like creature which bounced away at the cost of no more than a few pots of varnish. Her owner, a boxing Blue, was among those present. Still in play, we bore down upon the fabled *Firefly*, winner of yesterday's regatta. I now realized that the reason why I was not making more headway with the sail was because I had been pulling the wrong end of the clothes-line. Making a mental note to have the right end dyed red, I observed with some disquiet the last few inches flying through the pulley, thus allowing the sail to release its pent-up inhibitions where it would.

"It should be an interesting trip," snapped the first officer, as we put *Firefly* in her place with a noise like a giant matchbox being torn up. For perhaps another minute, during which our bows were seldom free from a little halo of splinters, we behaved like a well-directed cheese in a skittle-alley. Then we ground sturdily into the mud on the other side of the estuary, and as a most uncalled-for squall caught us in the slips *Sara Ann* turned tipsily on her side. In the wake of the first officer I crawled through black mud out on to the heather.

"The book says you can't expect everything to go like clockwork on your first sail," I muttered, pulling an embarrassed crab out of my chest.

"So that was sailing?"

"And we've learned a lot," I said.

"We're about to learn a lot more."

She pointed across the water to where a dinghy full of silent men was already pushing out from the staithe. It was true that among them there were beetling brows. ERIC.

Undressing the Hard Way.

"He took off his shoes and then, standing up, pulled his shirt over his head. Then slowly and more painfully his drill trousers and stockings."—From a novel.





"From a purely æsthetic point of view I do hope they take the right fork."

Where are the Marrows of Yesteryear?

I'VE been looking at some of the marrows they grow to-day—if you can call them marrows. When I was growing marrows, back in the last century, a marrow, by gosh, had to be a marrow to get anywhere. To-day—why, take any half-dozen prize-winning marrows and lay them alongside one of the marrows I used to turn out, and it would look like an old sow with her litter.

Didn't use all these new-fangled cloches, manures and fertilizers either. Our marrows grew rough and liked it. No nicotine-powder, slug-poison, and so on, for them. No, our marrows had to fight it out with the slugs themselves. We just used brains and natural ability—and plenty of space. It took space of course. I've known a chap start to grow a marrow at the bottom of the garden, and a couple of months later it was pressing up against the back door so hard they couldn't open it. It was a good, strong door, like they used to make in those days, or it couldn't have stood the pressure. Just out of interest, they took scientific instruments along and measured that pressure, and it worked out at I don't know how many pounds to the square inch. I know they said there was enough pressure there to drive a passenger train from London to Birmingham. They had to use the front door until the end of the marrow season and stop strangers going round to the back. They drew up a notice and stuck it up at the side entrance: "MARROW. DO NOT DISTURB."

But that all came of living in a house with a smallish garden. With most people who took marrows at all

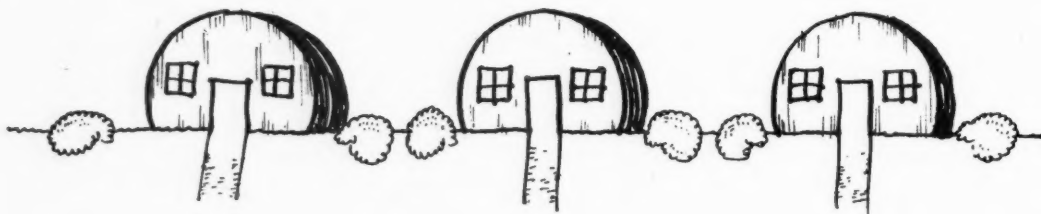
seriously the garden was the first thing they considered. If they judged it would be all right for marrows, why they went ahead and took the place without bothering what the house was like. I don't say ingenuity couldn't overcome cramped space, because it could. I'm thinking now of a fellow I knew very well, a fellow called Jim Canwell, a very capable marrow-grower. He only had a very small back yard, a mere shaft, as you might say. You might reckon that would defeat him and turn his thoughts to chrysanthemums, or rabbits, or such-like. But not Jim Canwell. He grew his marrow on end. It made the house terribly dark as it rose up storey by storey, but you can't have everything.

What a job he had fetching her out when she reached the full pride of maturity! A crane couldn't get at it, and they couldn't think of any other way. Well, as a matter of fact, they never did get her out. They just set to and ate her where she was. I don't mean they all sat round and gnawed it away. No, they'd carve a couple of chunks off every day and take them inside and cook them, and by eating marrow twice a day and three times on Sundays they got the back yard clear just in time for the next marrow season. They got a bit tired of marrow; did the Canwells, and they cooked it every way they'd ever heard of, and a good many ways they'd invented, to try to make it taste different; but it wasn't any use—somehow they could always tell it was marrow. When they came down to the last meal Mrs. Canwell was so thankful she asked a blessing for the first time in months.

My own marrows were all on a similar scale, so I know what I'm talking about. I got fed up with winning the Open Marrow event at the Flower and Vegetable Show. Did it year after year. Silver cups? Why, I had to have special supports rigged up under my sideboard. Sometimes my marrow was so big I couldn't get it along to the show. When that happened they'd bring the show along to my marrow. One of the best jobs I ever did was a job for the harvest festival. Mind you, one of my marrows was a harvest festival in itself. It didn't need anything else to back it up. This one wouldn't go into the church. The vicar wanted to take the roof off and lower her in, but I wouldn't let him do that.

The way we got round it, we had the marrow sawn up into about fifty sections, all numbered. Then they carted the sections inside and re-assembled it. When the congregation saw it they wouldn't believe it was all one marrow. They thought it must have been put together out of half the marrows in the neighbourhood. They published a special marrow edition of the parish magazine that month with a photograph of the eastern elevation of my marrow and me leaning up against it smoking my pipe.

There's a lot more marrows I could tell you about—some of my own, some that belonged to other men; but what's the good? People don't understand or appreciate marrows nowadays. Only the other day I saw a prize-winning marrow that I'd have been ashamed to put into the ridge-cucumber class. I tell you, it makes me sad sometimes.



"Wot! Still no houses?"

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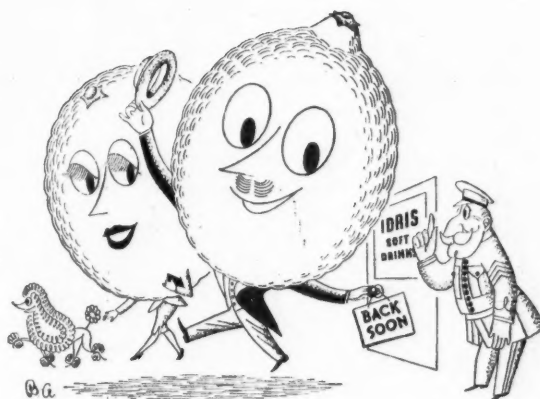
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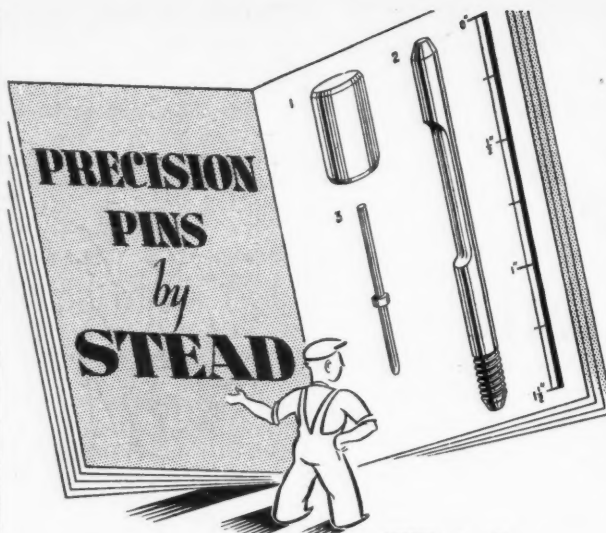
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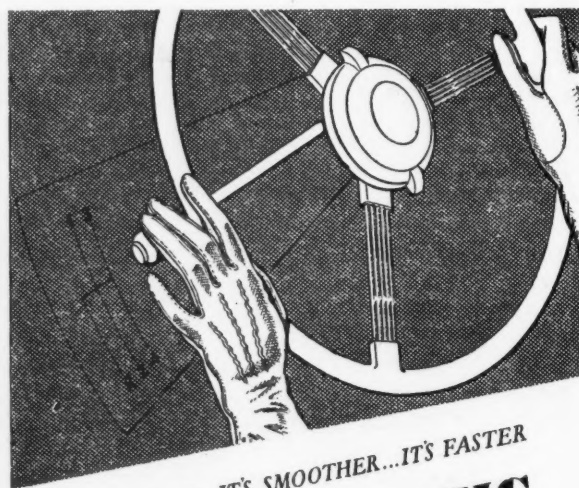
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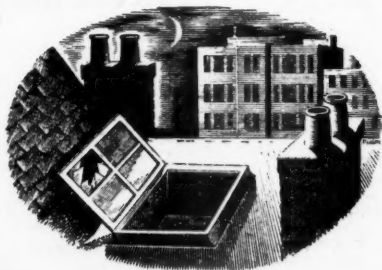
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P.

The thief attacks at many points

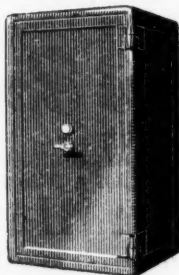


What are your weapons of defence?

Perhaps tomorrow, perhaps next year, the thief will break in. You may not be there to stop his entry — but modern methods of defence will prevent him from reaching his objective.

Plan for security *now*, not only against the thief, but against fire, that more fearsome foe. Check your systems of protection. If you have the slightest doubt that your valuables or important documents are not fully guarded in your office, factory, warehouse, or shop, act immediately.

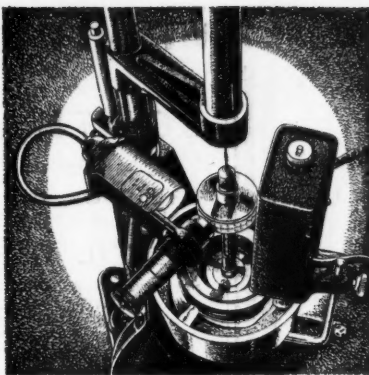
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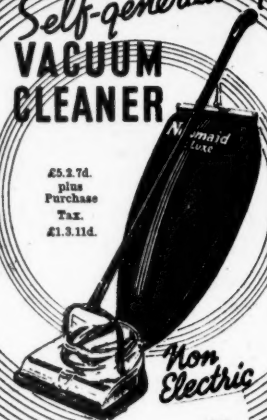
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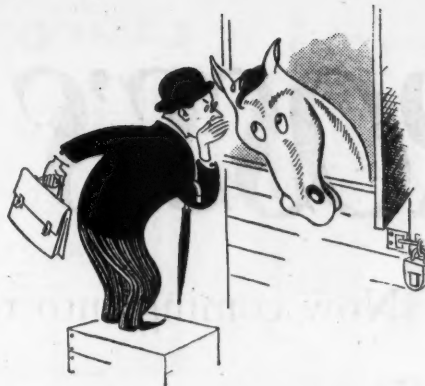


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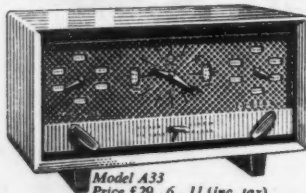


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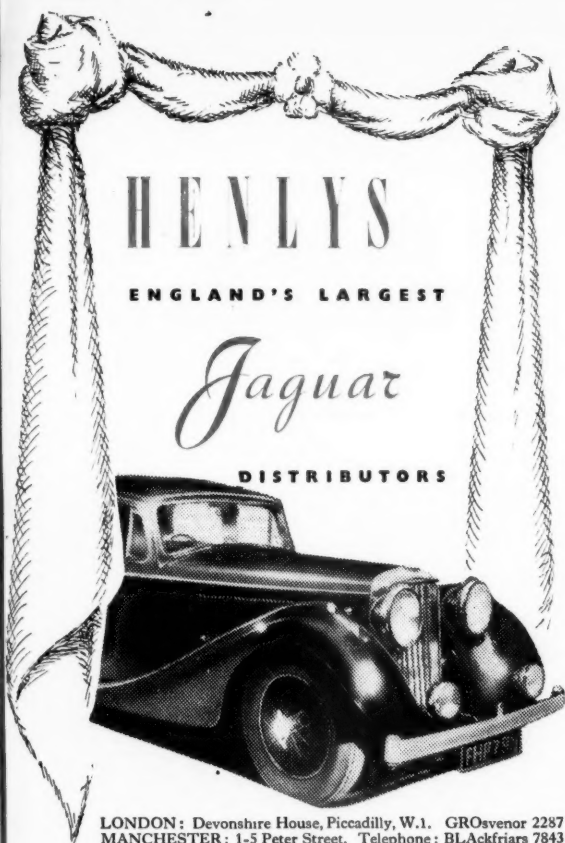
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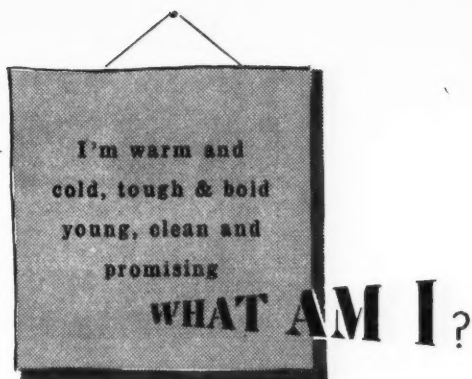
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